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THE

SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY

ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.

AND

EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry."

FIRDAUSÍ

VOL. II

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ERRATA

Page 61, line 9, *for* ' bears ' *read* ' bear.'
Page 69, line 20, *add* semicolon at end.
Page 157, line 7, *for* ' spoken ' *read* ' unspoken.'
Page 221, line 13, *for* ' unled ' *read* ' unsoiled.'
Page 257, line 2 from bottom, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma at end.
Page 265, line 18, *delete* comma at end.
Page 281, line 22, *for* ' Irán ' *read* ' Túrán.'
Page 306, line 14, *add* comma at end.
Page 384, line 7 from bottom, *delete* comma *and insert* full stop at end.
Page 390, bottom, *delete* " *and insert* ' ".

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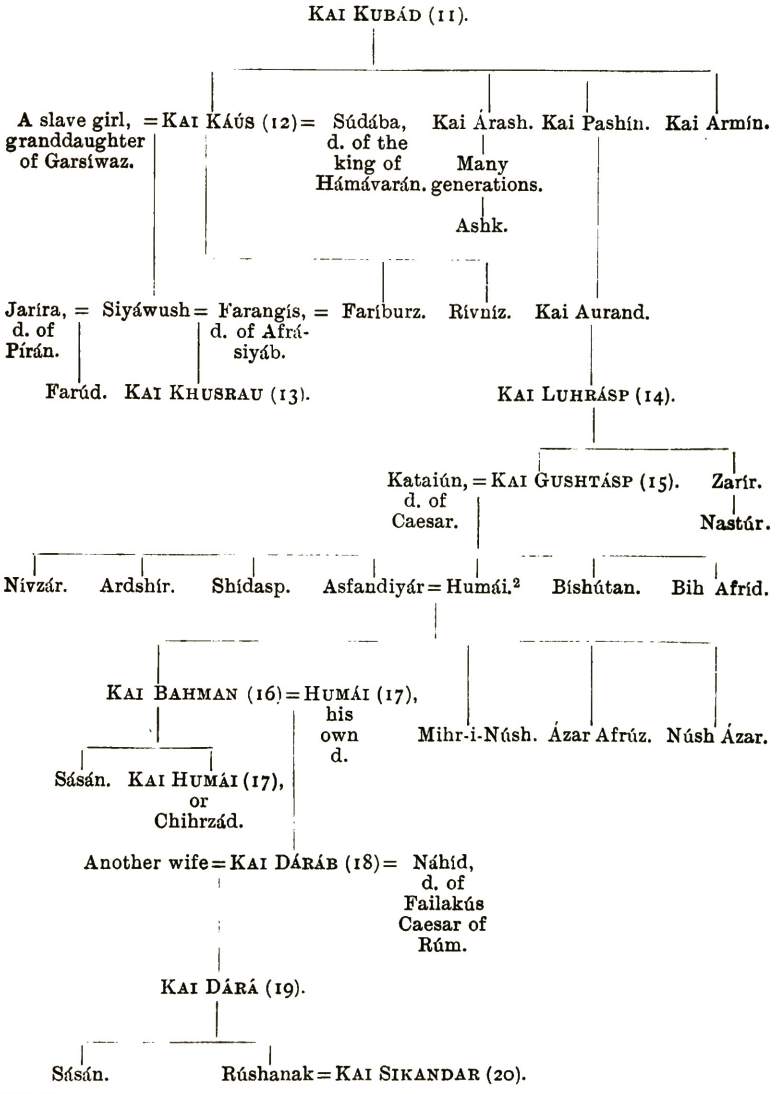
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THE SHÁHNÁMA

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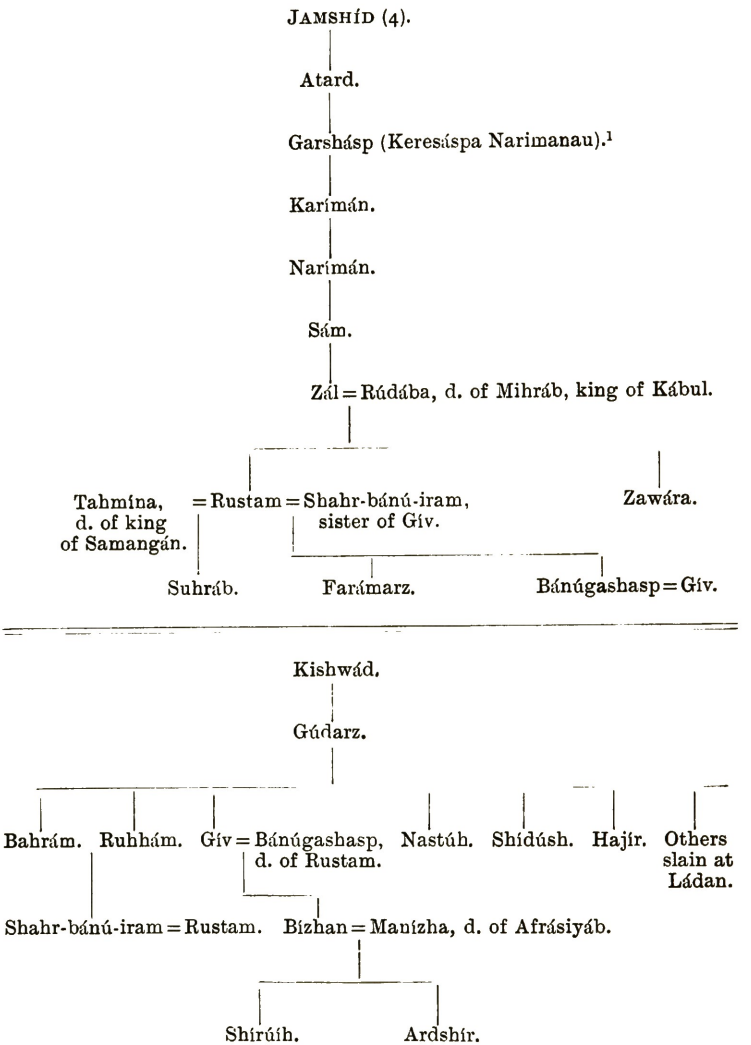
(ACCORDING TO THE SHÁHNÁMA)



[1] The Bundahish occasionally interpolates a generation, but the variations are not of importance.

[2] Dakíkí is the authority for this marriage, and his account comes from older sources. Firdausí ignores the marriage, and his story is inconsistent with it.

GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF THE ÍRÁNIAN HEROES



[1] See vol. i. p. 172.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.—Macan's edition of the Sháhnáma.
L.—Lumsden's do.
P.—Mohl's do.
T.—Tihrán do.
V.—Vullers' do.

DEI. J. Darmesteter, Études Iraniennes.

DHA. The History of Antiquity. From the German of Professor Max Duncker. By the late Evelyn Abbott, M.A.

DZA. Professor Darmesteter's Trans. of the Zandavasta in the Sacred Books of the East. References to Parts[1] and pages.

GHP. Histoire des Perses par le Comte de Gobineau.

GKS. Kleine Schriften von Alfred von Gutschmid.

HEP. Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsís. By Martin Haug, Ph.D. Edited and enlarged by E. W. West, Ph.D.

KUR. Kitab-i-Yamini of Al Utbi. Translated by the Rev. James Reynolds, B.A.

MHP. History of Persia. By Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.

MM. Maçoudi: Les Prairies d'Or texte et traduction par C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille.

MSJP. A Second Journey through Persia, &c. By James Morier, Esq.

NIN. Das Iranische Nationalepos von Theodor Nöldeke.

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[1] The second edition of Part I. is referred to unless otherwise specified.

RP. Professor Rawlinson's Parthia in The Story of the Nations' Series.

SAC. The Chronology of Ancient Nations . . . of Albírúní . . . translated . . . by Dr. C. Edward Sachau.

WPT. Dr. E. W. West's Trans. of the Pahlaví Texts in the Sacred Books of the East. Reference to Parts and pages.

ZT. Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mo'hammed-Ben-Djarir-Ben-Yezid Tabari. Traduite sur la version Persane d'Abou-'Ali Mo'hammed Bel'ami par M. Hermann Zotenberg.

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

á as in "water."
î as in "pique."
û as in "rude."
a as in "servant."
i as in "sin."
u as in "foot."
ai as *i* in "time."
au as *ou* in "cloud."
g is always hard as in "give."
kh as *ch* in the German "buch."
zh as *z* in "azure."

II

THE KAIÁNIAN DYNASTY

ARGUMENT

The poet continues and ends the story of the great feud between the descendants of Íraj and Túr. It is set out at large and ends with the triumph of the former.

He then tells of the coming of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster), of his evangel, and of the religious wars that ensued, taking occasion in this connexion to rescue from oblivion the name of the poet Dakíkí.

He next narrates the extinction of the heroic race of Írán, and the circumstances that led to the conquests of Sikandar (Alexander the Great), with whose death the Kaiánian dynasty comes to an end.

NOTE

The word Kai, from which the adjective Kaiánian is derived, is found in the Vedas under the form of Kavi, where it means a seer or priest, and is especially applied to the priest who, by drinking the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant,[1] became inspired. In the Zandavasta Kai is used in two very different senses. In one of these, and particularly in the sacred hymns known as the Gáthas, it is synonymous with 'heretic,' in the other it forms a part of the names of a whole dynasty of Iránian heroes, who are known collectively as the Kávyans or Kaians. This two-fold use has been appealed to by Haug to support his theory that Zoroastrianism sprang from a schism among the Brahmins—a theory which has been much disputed.[2]

In the Sháhnáma also the word is used in two senses, as a general term for a great king or ruler, and as the distinctive title of the royal house of Kubád, the founder of the Kaiánian dynasty. This consists of ten Sháhs, who fall into two groups. The first contains three Sháhs—Kubád himself, his son Káús, and his great grandson

---

[1] See vol. i. p. 8.

[2] For the above, see HEP, 289 *seq.*; DZA, i. xxx.

Khusrau. With the last of these the old epic cycle of the poem comes to an end, and up to this point the Kaiánian may be regarded as the complement of the Pishdádian dynasty. We are then introduced to the second group—the Sháhs of the house of Luhrásp—Luhrásp himself, Gushtásp, Bahman, Humái, Dáráb, Dárá, and Sikandar. Luhrásp, though of Kaian race, is represented as owing his accession to the throne to the nomination of Khusrau. With the accession of Luhrásp a new epic motive is introduced—a religious one—and the scene of action is shifted to Balkh. A very noticeable feature of this part of the poem is the prevalence of the termination 'asp,' the Persian word for 'horse,' in the names of the chief characters. Thus we have Luhrásp himself, his son Gushtásp, and the great minister Jámásp, while we know from other sources that the name of the father of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster) was Paurúshasp.[1] It is, however, still more remarkable to find that the reigning king of Túrán of the period is named Arjásp.[2] It looks as if the wars, admittedly religious, between Gushtásp and Arjásp were not waged between the Íránians and Túránians at all, though they came in time to be looked back upon as such, but were wars between the Íránians themselves due to the dissensions caused by the evangel of Zarduhsht.

Professor Duncker, who is concerned to antedate the Zandavasta as far as possible, is inclined to regard Luhrásp and Gushtásp as kings of an ancient dynasty flourishing at Balkh about 1000 B.C.[3] This of course is opposed to the old notion which sought to identify and to synchronise the chief characters and events of the Kaiánian dynasty with the accounts found in Greek authors of the so-called Median, and first Persian, empires.[4] So far as authentic history is concerned, however, it may be stated broadly that there is no common ground between the Sháhnáma and the works of ancient Greek writers till we reach the epoch of Sikandar—Alexander the Great—and even then the consensus is due to the fact that Firdausí derived his information from the modified version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes—a romantic legendary history of Alexander the Great—which he found ready to his hand among his other authorities. With regard to legend the case is different. The two main Greek versions of the youth of Cyrus the Great may be identified in the Sháhnáma, that of Herodotus in the account of the birth and bringing up of Kai Khusrau, and that of Ctesias in the account of

---

[1] WPT, i. 141.

[2] An Arjásp appears among the chiefs of Afrásiyáb as early as the reign of Kai Káús. See p. 264.

[3] DHA, v. 48.

[4] See, for instance, MHP, i. 512 *seq.*

the early days of Ardshír Pápakán, the founder of the Sásánian dynasty.[1] This does not imply, as in the case of Sikandar, that Firdausí was in any way indebted to Greek sources, but that he and the Greek writers both availed themselves of the same cycle of legend at intervals many centuries apart. The same may be said of the charming story of Gushtásp in Rúm, which will appear in a later volume of this translation. A Greek version of the love-interest in this story is preserved for us in the *Deipnosophistæ* of Athenæus,[2] who quotes Chares of Mytilene—an official at the court of Alexander the Great—as his authority. Similarly in Humái, the seventeenth Sháh, we may have a reminiscence of Semiramis.

With regard to the Kaiánian dynasty in general we may say that in no other part of the poem is the epic subject-matter so abundant or of finer quality, nor in any part of this long dynasty superior to what is to be found in the reign of Kai Káús in this volume.

---

[1] See NIN, 3; GKS, iii. 133; and for the accounts of Herodotus and Ctesias, DHA, v. 335 *seq.*

[2] Bk. xiii., ch. 35, ed. A. Meineke.

XI

KAI KUBÁD

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED YEARS

ARGUMENT

Kai Kubád ascends the throne, and defeats the Túránians. Rustam in this his first campaign greatly distinguishes himself, and nearly takes Afrásiyáb prisoner. Pashang, the father of Afrásiyáb and ruler of Túrán, sues for peace and terms are arranged. Kai Kubád rewards Zál, Rustam, and others for their services, and makes Istakhr his capital. At the end of a long and glorious reign he dies after appointing his son Kai Káús as his successor.

NOTE

Kai Kubád is mentioned at least twice in the Zandavasta, where he appears under the name of Kaváta, or Kavi Kaváta, and the name of his son Kai Káús appears both there and in the Vedas. We have no accounts of Kai Kubád's ancestry in the poem beyond the vague statement that he was descended from Farídún.[1] He is described indeed as being brought by Rustam from Mount Alburz—the great mythical range which was supposed to encircle the earth. According to the Bundahish, Kai Kubád, like Dáráb after him, was exposed at birth and was found and adopted by Zav, the son of Tahmásp, the ninth Sháh.[2] The same authority describes him as reigning for fifteen years.[3]

§ 1

How Kai Kubád ascended the Throne and warred against Túrán

WHEN Kai Kubád acceded to the throne, V. 298
And donned the jewelled crown, chiefs such as Zál,
Káran the warrior, Kishwád, Kharrád,

[1] For Kai Kubád's genealogy, see ZT, i. 407.
[2] WPT, i. 136. [3] *Id.* 150.

And valorous Barzín, flocked round and scattered
Gems over that new crown. They said: "O Sháh
Prepare to fight the Turkmans."
Hearing this
He went, reviewed his host, and on the morrow
Marched forth while shouts rose from his tent-enclosure.
Then Rustam armed and like an angry elephant
Sent up the dust, the troops arrayed their ranks,
And girt their loins for bloodshed. On one wing
Mihráb the master of Kábul was stationed,
Upon the other doughty Gustaham.
Káran the warrior was in the centre
With bold Kishwád the shatterer of hosts,
V. 299 While Rustam led the van with chiefs and heroes,
And Zál and Kai Kubád as their supports.
Here there was fire, there storm, while Káwa's standard
Amid the van made earth red, violet,
And yellow, and the seated world was like
A wave-tossed barque upon the sea of Chín.
The deserts and the dales were carpeted
By shields on shields, the falchions gleamed like lamps,
And all the world became a sea of pitch
Whereon a hundred thousand tapers burned.
Thou wouldst have said: "The sun hath lost its way
Frayed by the trumpets' blare and warriors' shouts!"
The hosts encountered, none knew van from rear.
V. 300 Káran o'erthrew ten warriors at each charge;
Now wheeling to the left, now to the right,
And seeking to wreak vengeance on all sides,
He made earth mountain-like with slain, astounding
The bravest Turkmans. Seeing Shamásás,
Who raised the war-cry lion-like, he charged,
Unsheathed his sword, smote his foe's head, and shouted:—
"The famed Káran am I," while Shamásás

Sank to the ground and perished in a breath.
The manner of this ancient sky is so,
At whiles like arrow and at whiles like bow!

§ 2

How Rustam fought with Afrásiyáb

When Rustam saw the doings of Káran,
And what war is, he went to Zál and said:—
"Tell me, O paladin of paladins!
Where doth malevolent Afrásiyáb V. 301
Stand in the fight? Describe his garb and banner.
I see a fluttering flag of violet.
Describe him that I may encounter him,
And so exalt my head among the chieftains.
To-day will I lay hold upon his girdle
And bring him hither haled upon his face."
Zál answered: "Hearken unto me, my son!
And run no risks to-day. He is a Dragon,
Whose breath is fire—a Cloud of bale in war.[1]
His flag and mail are black, his helm and brassards
Of iron flecked with gold, his plume is sable.
Avoid him, he is brave, his fortune sleepless."
"Be not concerned for me," was Rustam's answer.
"With God mine aid, heart, sword, and arm my ramparts, V. 302
Although he be a Dragon and a dív
Yet will I bring him by the belt, and thou
Shalt see me make him lifeless in the mellay,
So dealing that Pashang's troops shall bewail him."
That lion-youth—the shelter of the host—
Urged on his steed—Rakhsh of the brazen hoofs—
And shouting mid the trumpet-blare approached
The army of Túrán. Afrásiyáb
Beheld amazed the lad not fully grown
And asked: "Who is he, for I know him not—

[1] Cf. p. 53.

Yon Dragon broken loose in such a fashion?"
One said: "The son of Zál the son of Sám.
Dost thou not see him with his grandsire's mace?
He is a youth and eager for distinction."
Then like a vessel lifted by the waves
Afrásiyáb came forth while Rustam clipped
Rakhsh firmly, shouldering his massive mace,
But hung it to his saddle when he closed;
Then, having caught the monarch by the belt,
And dragged him from his poplar saddle, hoped
To carry him to Kai Kubád to tell
The story of this first day's fight; but through
The chieftain's weight and Rustam's grasp the girdle
Snapped, and the king came headlong to the ground,
Whereat his cavaliers surrounded him,
V. 303 While Rustam, when the chief escaped his clutch,
Gnawed at his hand's back in chagrin and cried:—
"Why did I take him not beneath the armpit
And simply make him handfast with his girdle?"
While from the elephants' backs the sound of bells
Rose, and the drums were heard for miles, men brought
The Sháh glad tidings: "Rustam," they reported,
"Brake through the centre of the Turkman host
And reached their general whose standard now
Hath disappeared, for Rustam seized his girdle
And flung him easily. The Turkmans yelled,
The valiant chiefs formed round their fallen king,
And bare him off. When vanquished thus he mounted
A fleet steed, fled toward the plain, and left
His host to save his life."
At this good news
The Sháh gave orders to his troops to fall
In mass like wind upon the enemy
And utterly o'erthrow them, fruit and root.
He rose himself like fire, and all his host
Heaved like a stormy sea. Zál and Mihráb,

The Lion, went forth keen and valorous;
The din of battle rose with falchion-flash
And thud of shaft, while heads grew dazed as axes V. 304
Crashed on gold helm and shield. Thou wouldst have said:—
"A cloud somewhence hath risen and is flecking
Yon oranges with magic cinnabar!"
Upon that day of battle sank and rose
Blood to the Fish and dust-clouds to the Moon,
While through the horse-hoofs on that spacious plain
One earth flew up to make another heaven![1]
Heroic Rustam in the fight that day
With dirk and lasso, mace and scimitar,
Clave into pieces, rent and brake and bound
The heads, breasts, feet, and hands of warriors,
For eight and fifty score of gallant chiefs
That Lion slaughtered in a single charge.
Zál gazing on his son illustrious
In Grace and might felt his heart throb with joy
To see such prowess, while the Turkmans pressed V. 305
Thus by the Magian host sought Dámaghán,
And thence fled toward Jíhún with stricken hearts,
With din and dudgeon, with their weapons broken
And girdles snapped—a trumpless, drumless mob.
The paladins that led the Íránian host
Turned from pursuing and drew near the Sháh,
All plunder-wearied, bringing band on band
Of captive Turkmans. When the troops were back
In camp again the mighty men approached
The monarch of the world, extolling him,
While Rustam also went before the Sháh,
Who seated him on one side of the throne
And famous Zál upon the other one.

[1] Literally, "The earth became six and the heaven eight." Firdausí is speaking of the Seven Climes, and of the heavens of the Seven Planets only, in this passage. Cf. vol. i. pp. 71, 72.

§ 3

How Afrásiyáb came to his Father

Upon the Turkman side Afrásiyáb
Fled to the river-bank and tarried there
For seven days, made ready on the eighth,
And gat him to his sire, all rage and grief;
His tongue was long although his hands were shortened.
"O famous king!" said he, "the fault was thine
In seeking war; the mighty men of old
Gave kings no precedent for breach of faith.
The offspring of Íraj polluteth still
The earth; that poison gnaweth yet; they come
Without a break to lord it o'er the world.
v. 306 Now 'tis Kubád; he hath assumed the crown
And flung the gates of vengeance wide again.
A cavalier of Sám's seed hath appeared,
By Zál named Rustam. Like a crocodile
Enraged he charged, and thou hadst said: "His breath
Will burn the world." He sped o'er hill and dale,
And plied mace, sword, and stirrup. All the air
Rang with his crashing mace. Life was not worth
A pinch of dust to me. He overthrew
Our host; none ever saw a sight so strange!
He spied my flag, put down his massive mace,
And snatched me from my poplar saddle so
That thou hadst said I was not one gnat's weight!
My girdle and my hauberk's fastening snapped,
I tumbled from his grasp beneath his feet.
No lion hath such strength, his feet touch earth,
His head is in the clouds. My cavaliers
Came up and saved me from that Mountain's clutches.
Thou know'st how kingly are my heart and hand,
My prowess, deeds, and enterprise, yet I
Am but a fibre in his grasp. Such worship

Perturbeth me. I saw a monstrous form
With lion's claws. My wits and senses fled.
Hill, cave, and level road were one to him
When his mad Elephant was put to speed.
A thousand maces in good sooth and more
Fell on his famous helm: thou wouldst have said:—
'They fashioned him of iron, brought him up
On stones and brass!' What is a sea or mountain, V 307
Fierce lion or mad elephant to him?
He pricketh forth as on a hunting-day,
And battle is his pastime. Had such might
Been Sám's no Turkman chief would now survive.
We can but sue for peace, because thy troops
Give way before him. I, an atheling,
Thine army's stay and thine own help in need,
Have no strength left to fight with him. Go to,
Take counsel and make peace. They gave the land,
Assigned of old by Farídún to Túr,
To me; and that apportionment was just.[1]
Revive not ancient feuds for, if we pass
The boundary and prosecute the war,
We shall but make the world strait to ourselves.
Thou know'st that sight is better than report,
For hearsay's belly is an empty one.
To fight Írán appeared a jest to thee,
The soldiers think that it hath gone too far.
Defer not to to-morrow this day's work;
Who knoweth what to-morrow may bring forth?
The roses blooming in the garden now
To-morrow thou wouldst pluck — when they are
worthless!
Mark what a wealth of golden equipage,
Of golden helmets and of golden shields,
How many Arab steeds with golden bits,
What Indian scimitars with golden scabbards,

[1] Referring to the partition in the days of Zav. Vol. i. p. 371.

And, over and above these, what famed chieftains
The blast hath vilely borne away—Kulbád,
And bold Bármán who hunted lions only,
And Kharzarwán, whom Zál hath dashed to pieces
And shown his massive mace's mastery,
V. 308 Fierce Shamásás—the shelter of the host—
Slain by Káran upon the battlefield,
And, in addition to these famous men,
Ten thousand others slaughtered in this war;
Worse still, observe the breach of fame and honour
That we can never bind. Though I have slain
One famous chief—illustrious Ighríras—
Let fortune's good and ill cry quits to-day,
And leave to-morrow for the reckoning;
Because the haughty chiefs have come to me,
The heroes, each one with his flag behind him,
And told me much that happened when I fled
In dudgeon and they followed. Now revive not
The memory of the past, but strive to make
A peace with Kai Kubád, lest hosts should come
Upon thee from four sides: on this side Rustam,
Whose prowess in the fight outshineth Sol;
On that Káran, whose eye ne'er saw defeat;
Upon the third Kishwád, the golden-helmed,
Who brought the captives from Ámul; Mihráb
Is on the fourth, next to the Sháh in place,
Lord of Kábul, a man of rede and Grace."

§ 4

How Pashang sued to Kai Kubád for Peace

The chieftain of Túrán, whose eyes were tearful,
Was all astonied at Afrásiyáb
V. 309 That he should have bethought him of such words,
And that his soul had turned to what was just.
He chose a prudent envoy for Irán,

And wrote a letter worthy of the Artang,[1]
Decked with a hundred colours and designs:—
"In the name of Him who ruleth sun and moon,
And gave to us the faculty of praise!
May He accept the soul of Farídún,
From whom our race deriveth, warp and woof.
Hear now, O famous Kai Kubád! and I
Will utter words of kingly rede and right.
Túr brought calamity on blest Íraj
Upon a question touching crown and throne.
On this I say that feuds should not endure
For ever, and if vengeance for Íraj
Was owing it was wreaked by Minúchihr.
In that first settlement by Farídún, V. 310
Whose object was a just apportionment,
It will be well for us to acquiesce
And not transgress the precedents of kings.
From Turkestán to Má wara 'u'n-Nahr,
Whose boundary is Jíhún, that is our share.
When Farídún was Sháh Íraj ne'er saw it,
But had from him his blessing and Írán.
If we transgress these boundaries and fight
We make earth strait to us, the scimitars
Will clash, God will be wroth, and we shall lose
Our portion in both worlds. What Farídún
Divided unto Salm, Túr, and Íraj,
Let us retain and then be friends henceforth,
For earth itself is worth not so much bale.
The reverend head of Zál hath grown like snow,
The dust is crimson with our warriors' blood,
And yet a man will only own at last
His body's length of all that he possesseth!

[1] The name of the house where the famous Persian painter Mání, the founder of Manicheism, lived; also of a book written by him. Both house and book were elaborately adorned. Manichean MSS. in general were finely written and illuminated. Cf. Professor Bloomfield, "The Long-lost Mani Bible," in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* for March 1906.

We with a shroud for robe, a grave for home,
Shall own but some five cubits' length of earth;
All other wishes are but care and toil—
A cause for trouble in this Wayside Inn.
If Kai Kubád doth acquiesce in this,
And if that sage's head ensueth right,
Not one of us shall dream of the Jíhún,
But let the Íránians keep to their own side.
It may be that good will and intercourse
Will make both realms contented with this pact."
He sealed and sent this to the Íránian host
With jewels, crowns, gold thrones, fair damsels girt
V 311 With gold, Arabian steeds with golden trappings,
And Indian swords in silvern sheaths besides
The goodliest native wares. The envoy reached
Kubád and gave the letter and the message.
The king of kings read and replied at large:—
"We did not recommence; this war was caused
Directly by Afrásiyáb. The wrong
Began with Túr when he bereaved a prince
Such as Íraj was of the throne, and now
It is Afrásiyáb that crosseth over
The river to invade us. Thou hast heard
His treatment of Naudar, which filled wild beasts
With grief and pain, while on wise Ighríras
He did a deed unworthy of a man.
Yet if ye do repent I will renew
The compact, though I well could take revenge,
Armed as I am for all emergencies,
Thus leaving you the lands beyond the river,
And then perchance Afrásiyáb will rest."
The Sháh drew up the treaty and thus planted
A fresh tree in the garden of his greatness.
The envoy went and brought with leopard's speed
The letter to Pashang, who packed his baggage,
Marched back, and sent the dust-clouds heavenward.

He crossed Jíhún like wind, and news thereof
Reached Kai Kubád, who joyed because the foe
Withdrew without a fight, but Rustam said:—
"Look not, O Sháh! for peace in time of war. V. 312
Of old we ne'er had rest from their assaults;
My mace it was that made them thus to-day."
Thus to that noble chief spake Kai Kubád:—
"Naught have I seen more goodly than the right.
Pashang, a scion of blest Farídún,
Avoideth strife for he hath had enough,
And men of wisdom must not look upon him
Askance and with injustice. I will draw
A deed of gift on silk for thee of all
Between the Indus and Zábulistán.
Go take the throne and crown too of Nímrúz,
And lighten all the world. Upon this side
Give to Mihráb Kábul, and keep thy spearpoints
Sharp, for where'er a king is there is war
Though earth is broad enough."
The Sháh prepared
Gifts both for Rustam and for Zál whose head
He crowned, whose loins he girt, with gold, and gave
Half of the world to him. He kissed the ground.
Kubád the fortune-favoured further said:—
"Ne'er may the throne of majesty lack Zál,
One hair of whom outweigheth all the world;
He is the heirloom left us by the great."
They furnished forth five elephants with litters
Inlaid with turquoise brighter than Nile-water,
And spread upon the litters cloth of gold,
Besides unreckoned wealth, a royal robe
Of gold, a crown and girdle wrought of jewels
And turquoise, all of which he sent to Zál,
And said: "I fain had sent a greater gift,
And, should long life be mine, I will not leave V. 313
A wish of thine unsatisfied on earth."

Moreover on Káran the warrior,
Upon Kishwád, Kharrád, Barzín, Púlád,
He showered robes of honour as was fit,
And to the rest that seemed to him deserving
Gave money, shields, and swords, or, if he felt
Their merit greater still, a sword and belt.

§ 5

How Kai Kubád came to Istakhr of Párs

Thence Kai Kubád departed unto Párs
Where lay his treasury. The capital
Was then Istakhr—the glory of the Ḳaians.
With general assent he claimed the crown
And, mounted on the Kaian throne, held sway
By justice and the customs of the wise.
He thus addressed the chiefs: "The world is mine.
For elephants to war on gnats would make
A breach in Faith and justice. I will have
Naught but the right, for of God's anger cometh
Disaster. I have brought men peace by toil
And justice, and where earth and water are
My treasure is. Kings are my bodyguard;
I hold the citizen and soldier equal.
Make God your refuge, be ye wise and harmless,
Enjoy what ye possess, give liberally,
And thank me too for that which ye enjoy;
While they that want and cannot live by work
Shall pasture at my court."
He gathered troops,
And went about inspecting everywhere.
Thus for ten years he roved and ministered
All justice publicly and privily.
V. 314 He built him many cities—jocund seats—

Such as the hundred that surrounded Rai,
But when the hand of time had fallen upon him
He set his face toward Párs, sat on the throne
'Mid archimages, readers of the stars,
And sages, gathered too his warriors,
And gazing on them with a wounded heart
Talked of the mighty who had passed away.
His gifts and justice made the world rejoice,
And thus he reached his hundredth year in joy.
See if the world hath any king like him.
He had four sons, all men endowed with wisdom,
To keep his memory alive on earth:
The first was glorious Káús, the second
Was Kai Árash, the third was Kai Pashín,
The fourth was Kai Armín. They walked the world
In peace and great content.
A century passed,
A change of fortune came to crown and throne,
For when the Sháh perceived that death drew near,
And that the green leaf was about to wither,
He summoned noble Kai Káús, spake much
Of justice and of generosity,
And said: "I load the baggage to depart.
Perform mine obsequies and take the throne,
Though as for me I seem but just arrived
Rejoicing with my men from Mount Alburz!
Oh! what a thing is fortune thus to leave us
Without a warning! They that worship it
Lack wisdom. Thou, if thou art just and upright,
Wilt have thy guerdon in the other world,
While if thy passions shall ensnare thy wits
Thou wilt unsheathe a sword whose edge is keen—
A sword wherewith thou first wilt wound thyself
And afterward resign it to the foe:
Thy dwelling there will be a place of fire; V 315
Here bitterness of heart and grief be thine."

He spake these words and leaving this wide world
Exchanged his palace for a sepulchre:
It hath been this world's way time out of mind
To form of dust and scatter to the wind.

The tale of Kai Kubád is at an end;
To that of Kai Káús attention lend.

XII

KAI KÁÚS

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Kai Káús on ascending the throne abandons the path of wisdom. He invades Mázandarán and is taken prisoner, but is rescued by Rustam. He wars against the king of Hámávarán, whose daughter he marries, and is taken prisoner again, this time by treachery. Rustam again rescues him. Afterward he attempts to fly to heaven, and is a third time saved by Rustam. The poet then tells two episodic stories, that of the Seven Warriors, and that of Suhráb, in both of which Rustam takes a leading part. We next learn what evil came of the marriage of Kai Káús with the daughter of the king of Hámávarán as exemplified in the tragic tale of Siyáwush. The poet then tells how Rustam took vengeance on Afrásiyáb for the execution of Siyáwush, how Gív went to Túrán in quest of Kai Khusrau, the son of Siyáwush, and how Kai Khusrau became joint Sháh with Kai Káús.

NOTE

Kai Káús appears in the Vedas as Kávya Ushaná, *i.e.* Ushaná the son of Kavi. He is said to have installed Agni (fire) as the high-priest of mankind, to have been the leader of the heavenly cows (the clouds) to pasturage, and to have wrought the iron club with which the god Indra slew the demon Vritra.[1]

The conception is therefore mythological. In the Zandavasta Kai Káús appears as Kavi Usa. "We sacrifice unto Verethraghna,[2] made by Ahura. . . . He carries the chariot of the lords; he carries the chariot of the lordly ones, the chariots of the sovereigns. He carried the chariot of Kavi Usa."[3] With the exception of this

[1] HEP, 278. [2] The raven. [3] DZA, ii. 240–2.

reference to his attempt to fly to heaven the remainder of his legend is lost so far as the Zandavasta itself is concerned, but a brief summary of what it once contained is extant in the Dínkard,[1] where we also find a strange story, of which no trace is to be found in the Sháhnáma, that Kai Káús possessed a wonderful ox, to whose judgment all disputes as to the frontier-line between Írán and Túrán were referred. As the decision was generally adverse to the Túránians they conceived the idea of beguiling Káús into slaying the ox, and succeeded in their purpose.[2] The story is characteristic of Kai Káús, who is represented in the poem as a very imperfect character, and easily led astray by passion, wrong-headedness, and evil counsels.

According to the genealogy of the Bundahish, Káús was the grandson of Kai Kubád.[3] Firdausí omits the intermediate generation.

The length of the reign is the same in both cases, and the Bundahish places Káús' attempt to reach the sky after he had been on the throne for seventy-five years,[4] and was, so to speak, at his meridian.

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[1] See p. 81.
[2] WPT, v. 31.
[3] *Id.* i. 136.
[4] *Id.* i. 150.

PART I

THE WAR WITH MÁZANDARÁN

ARGUMENT

The poet, after bewailing the death of Kai Kubád and that an evil shoot should spring from so good a root, tells how Kai Káús was seduced by a dív into invading Mázandarán, how he and all his host were taken captive and blinded by the White Dív, how Rustam went to their rescue, what adventures befell him by the way, and how he delivered the Sháh and host.

NOTE

Mázandarán, the ancient Hyrcania, lay, in the scheme of the old cosmogony, beyond the limits of the Central Clime[1] from which it was cut off by the great range of the Alburz Mountains, and extended from their northern scarp to the shores of the Caspian. Being abundantly supplied with moisture by the clouds which are stopped by, and the snow-fields which form upon, the Alburz Mountains, and the soil moreover being warmed by volcanic heat, the country is extremely fertile and the climate semi-tropical in character. "The lagunes of the coast are succeeded by marsh forests; higher up are fields of rice and plantations of sugar-cane, and beyond these fertile meadows, above which splendid forests of oaks, planes, and elms clothe the heights of Elburz. There is abundance of water fruits, figs and mulberries, olives and oranges, and the vigorous creepers of the vines run even to the summits of the trees."[2] On the other hand the climate is unhealthy and the air of the marshes blanches the inhabitants,[3] who for this reason were known to the Íránians as white dívs or demons. They are referred to in the Zandavasta and in the Pahlaví texts. "These are the words," we read in the former, with reference to a sacred formula which had to be recited several times, "that smite down

[1] Vol. i. p. 71. [2] DHA, v. 9. [3] *Id.* 10.

Angra Mainyu,[1] . . . these are the words that smite down the daévas of Mázana."[2]

In the Dínkard they seem to be described as inhabiting burrows and caves, and as being of filthy habits.[3] In the Sháhnáma we find this blanched race personified as the White Dív whom Rustam in his expedition into Mázandarán encounters in the cave.[4]

The approach to Mázandarán from Írán was difficult and romantic. Communication between western and eastern Írán depends on two routes which, branching from Tihrán, run to the south of, and parallel to, the Alburz range, an outlying spur of which they cross at two passes named the Firúzi Kuh and the Girduni Sirdarra respectively. At a distance of about seventy miles from Tihrán the route that runs through the Firúzi Kuh sends off a branch northward toward Mázandarán. This branch is a mere fissure, a few feet wide, in the mountain-wall, with a stream running at the bottom and water trickling down the precipitous sides, while here and there the fissure opens out into natural grottos and narrow valleys. This route, which abounds with game and is one of the favourite hunting-grounds of the Sháhs, is known as the Girduni Sawachi. Subsequently the pass of the Firúzi Kuh, six miles to the east of the mountain of that name, after traversing a tremendous gorge, sends off another branch to Mázandarán of a somewhat less romantic character than that of the Girduni Sawachi, and runs on to Astrábád, whence also Mázandarán may be reached.[5]

It was on emerging from the gloom of one of these passes that Rustam, we may imagine, reached the smiling land where he encountered Úlád, whose account of the extent of Mázandarán is of course enormously exaggerated.[6] The reader will see on looking at a map of Persia that Mázandarán is a region of quite moderate dimensions. Accuracy in matters geographical is not one of Firdausí's strong points.

With regard to Rustam's route we are told that by Zal's advice[7] he took the short road, not the long one taken by Kai Káús. Of course he would not take the latter, for Kai Káús, we may presume, started from Istakhr in Párs, to the west of the central desert, while Rustam started from Zábul, to the east of it. Firdausí merely means to indicate that Rustam did not follow the ordinary route, but cut as the crow flies across the waste. This route took, we are told, fourteen days, but Rustam ran a two days' journey into one

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[1] *i.e.* Áhriman.
[2] DZA, i. 141.
[3] WPT, iv. 216.
[4] § 12.
[5] MSJP, 363 *seq.* At p. 349 a map of these various routes is given.
[6] § 10, and cf. NIN, 49.
[7] § 5.

and made seven stages of it, in the course of each of which he met with an adventure. This expedition of his is accordingly known as the "Haft Khwán," the former word meaning seven and the latter the tray on which food is served up. His expedition therefore may be regarded as being a meal with seven courses. It has also been suggested that in the account of the seven buildings of Kai Káús, described in Part II. § 8 of this reign, we have the origin of the Haft Khwán of Rustam, and also of the similar expedition, which occurs much later in the poem, of Asfandiyár against Arjásp.[1]

We may add that in the Pahlaví the word used for these buildings is "mán." "Mán" comes from the same root as our word "mansion." In the Pahlaví form of the legend Rustam's expedition may have been known as the Haft Mán. In the translations from the Pahlaví legend, if such existed, this would naturally become "Haft Khán," the seven stopping-places or rest-houses, and this might easily be corrupted into the "Haft Khwán," the seven meals partaken of therein. Our text, however, has "Haft Khwán," which we translate "The Seven Courses," keeping the collocation of "The Seven Stages" for the corresponding expedition of Asfandiyár.

With regard to the opposition of the chiefs to the expedition of Kai Káús to Mázandarán as being unprecedented,[2] we can only suppose it to be a rhetorical flourish put into their mouths by the poet, who has already told us that Farídún and Minúchihr resided there.[3]

At the present day "Dív" is a title of honour among the nobles of that region.[4]

§ 1

The Prelude

If ever mortal injury befall
A fruitful tree, when it hath waxen tall,
Its leaf will fade, its root become unsound,
Its head begin to bend toward the ground;
And when the stem is snapped off at the root V. 316
'Twill yield its station to some fresh young shoot,

[1] WPT, iv. 220 and *note*.
[2] §§ 2 and 3.
[3] See vol. i. pp. 177, 230, 289.
[4] DHA, v. 262.

Resign thereto the garden's burgeoning
And all the lamp-like lustre of the spring;
But if, my friend! an evil shoot should rise,
Let not the good root suffer in thine eyes.
So when a father leaveth to his son
The world, and showeth him the course to run,
If he shall flout his father's regimen
Call him no longer son but alien.
He that abandoneth his teacher's path
Deserveth every evil that he hath.
This ancient hostelry is fashioned so
That thou canst not distinguish top from toe,
And he that wotteth of its evil way
Doth well to quit it with what speed he may.
Now let the stories which an ancient sage
Of prudent mind once told thy thoughts engage.[1]

§ 2

How Káús sat upon the Throne and was tempted to invade Mázandarán

Káús, succeeding to his father's throne
With all the world to serve him, looked upon
Heaped hoards of treasures manifold, and knew
That he had not his peer on earth for wealth
Of necklaces, of earrings, and of thrones,
High-crested Arab steeds, and golden crowns
Inlaid with emeralds.
Now as it chanced
He sat one day and quaffed delicious wine
Within a pleasure-palace arabesqued
With gold, and sat upon the golden throne,
Whose feet were crystal, master of the world,
Discussing many matters great and small
In converse with the Íránian paladins,

[1] There is no break here in the original.

And spake on this wise: "Who is Sháh but I,
Who worthy of the throne except myself?
I rule the world with none to say me nay."
The Sháh was thus conversing in his cups,
What while the captains wondered, when a dív
In minstrel's guise addressed the chamberlain.
"A native of Mázandarán am I,"
He said, "a noted bard. If I am worthy V. 317
To serve the Sháh let me approach his throne."
The chamberlain walked stately to the Sháh,
And said: "There is a minstrel at the gate—
A rare musician—and he hath his harp."
The Sháh bade fetch the man and set him down
Among the harpers. When his harp was tuned
He sang a ditty of Mázandarán:—

"Mázandarán, my native land!
May I forget it never,
And may its fields and fells abide
As populous as ever,

"For on its heights the hyacinth
And tulip bloom, while roses
Are ever blossoming anew
Within its garden-closes.

"The landscape is fulfilled with charm,
The atmosphere is pleasant,
And there is neither heat nor cold,
But spring is ever present.

"While in each garth the nightingale
Discourseth musically,
The deer are pacing daintily
In every mountain valley

"Throughout the year without a break
Intent upon their questing,
And evermore the hues are bright,
And scents exhale unresting.

"As for the rivers thou wouldst say :—
'They run rose-water surely!'
And at the fragrance breathing thence
The soul rejoiceth purely.

"There when the year is young and when
'Tis many a month the older,
A soil all tulips and a-bloom
Saluteth the beholder.

"The livelong year the streamlet's lips
Are laughing, and the foray
Of hawk and hunter after game
Will never fail of quarry.

"The provinces are gaily dight
Throughout their whole dimensions
With golden coins and with brocade,
And goodliest inventions;

"The handmaids there, as idols fair,
Are crowned with crowns all golden,
And there the loins of all the great
With belts of gold are holden.

"He that is not in that fair land
Of joy exceeding measure,
Delighting heart and mind alike,
What can he know of pleasure?"

The words roused Kai Káús, he was resolved
To lead a host against Mázandarán,
And thus harangued his warriors: "We have been
Too fond of feast. The brave but indolent
Will never tire of leisure and of home.
In fortune, Grace, and birth I pass Jamshíd, V 318
Zahhák, and Kai Kubád, and must surpass them
In prowess too: crowned heads should be ambitious."
The nobles heard and liked it not, turned pale,
And frowned, for no one wished to fight the dívs,
Though daring not to say so openly.
They sadly sighed—Tús, Gív, Gúdarz, Kishwád,
Kharrád, Gurgín, and brave Bahrám—and said:—
"Thy slaves are we and walk earth by thy will."
They met thereafter and spake out their minds:—
"What is this turn of fortune? If the Sháh
Remembereth the words said in his cups
'Twill be the ruin of us and of Írán,
And leave the land not even dust and water.
Jamshíd possessed the crown and finger-ring,
With dív and fowl and fay to do his will,
Yet spake he never of Mázandarán,
Or sought to fight against the valiant dívs,
While Farídún with all his craft and wisdom
Ne'er guided us to any such desire.
Had it been something fitting to achieve
By dint of manliness, name, gems, and treasure,
Then Minúchihr would have forestalled the matter
And not repressed his wishes. We must find
Some scheme to turn this evil from Írán."
Then Tús addressed the chiefs: "Brave veterans! V. 319
One remedy there is, and let us use it,
For 'tis not hard. Send we a cameleer
In haste to Zál the son of Sám to say:—
'If now thy head be soiled stay not to wash it,
But whet thy wits and let us see thy face.'

He may suggest some wise rede to the Sháh,
And tell him: 'Áhriman hath prompted this:
The portal of the dívs must ne'er be opened.'
Unless Zál can divert him from such talk
An end will come to all our ups and downs."
They talked it o'er, then sent a cameleer,
Who went apace toward Nímrúz, and when
He came to Zál—the lustre of the world—
Gave thus the nobles' message: "High-born son
Of Sám! a parlous case confronteth us,
And one that knowledge cannot estimate!
Bestir thyself or else we shall not have
Folk, field, or fell. A fancy hath arisen
Within the Sháh's heart. Áhriman hath turned him
From what is right, he is not satisfied
With travail such as his forefathers had,
But would have treasure where he hath not toiled,
And so must throne it in Mázandarán!
If thou delayest but to scratch thy head
He will have gone and given to the winds
Thy travail at the first with Kai Kubád,
V. 320 When thou with Rustam—that insatiate Lion—
Didst like a valiant lion gird thy loins;
All which is now as wind to Kai Káús,
Whose evil purposes distract his mind."
Zál when he heard grieved sorely that the leaves
Upon the royal tree were growing sere,
And said: "Káús, that man of headstrong will,
And not approved in this world's heat and cold,
Will hearken not to what the experienced say,
And sleepeth not upon his own designs.
If one who is the monarch of the world,
Whom years and sun and moon still circle o'er,
One at the thought of whose sword everywhere
Alike the nobles and the people tremble,
Will not obey me 'tis not wonderful;

Still it would grieve me if he hearkened not.
If I think of myself, not of the Sháh,
Then God, the Sháh, and all the warriors
Throughout Írán, will be displeased at me.
I will set out and offer mine advice;
If he accepteth it so much is gained;
If he is headstrong then our course is clear,
And Rustam now will be among the troops."
He mused all night, and when the sun displayed
Its crown on high begirt himself and journeyed,
Escorted by the chiefs, toward the Sháh.
Intelligence reached Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív,
Bahrám, Gurgín, and others: "Zál approacheth;
E'en now his royal standard is in sight."
The army-leaders, helmed as paladins,
Went forth to meet him and, when he was near,
Dismounted, went to him afoot, and blessed him.
Now, as they fared together to the Sháh,
Tús said to Zál: "So then, O noble chief!
Thou hast endured a journey of much toil,
And for the sake of us Íránian nobles V. 321
Hast chosen travail rather than repose!
We are devoted to thee: all of us
Feel honoured by thy crown and Grace."
Zál answered:
"The maxims of the men of old recur
To one whom years have worn, and later on
The course of heaven will justify his conduct.
We must not keep our counsel from the Sháh,
For he hath need thereof. If he rejecteth
The words of wisdom he will rue it sorely."
They cried: "We are agreed and will not hear
Another's words," then sought with one accord
The crown and throne and presence of their lord.

§ 3

How Zál gave Counsel to Káús

Attended by the lords with golden girdles
Zál led the way and, when he saw Káús
Rejoicing on the throne, approached the state
With downcast eyes and folded arms, then said:—
"O worldlord, who art mightiest of the mighty!
Throne hath not heard of, nor crown seen, thy peer,
Revolving heaven hath heard not of such fortune,
As thine. Be victor all thy years and glad
With heart all wisdom and with head all justice."
The famous Sháh received Zál graciously,
And, giving him a seat upon the throne,
V. 322 Asked him about the toil of that long journey,
About the chieftains and exalted Rustam.
He answered: "Ever live and conquer, Sháh!
We all are blithe and brightened by thy fortune,
And have our heads exalted by thy throne."
He then began his well considered speech:—
"O monarch of the world! thou well deservest
To have the throne and crown of mighty men.
Thou art the memory of Sháh Farídún,
And may this age ne'er rob thee of its love.
Now I have heard grave tidings that the Sháh
Hath some design upon Mázandarán.
V. 323 None of thy mighty predecessors thought
Of such a journey. Minúchihr in dying
Left here much wealth and many palaces;
So too did Zav, Naudar, and Kai Kubád
(How many a chief our memories recall
With massive maces and with mighty hosts!)
Yet they attempted not Mázandarán—
The home of warlock-dívs and under spells
Which none hath power to loose; so give not thou

Men, wealth, and money to the winds. That land
Can not be conquered by the scimitar,
Nor will it come to hand through wit and treasure.
To go or e'en to think of going thither
Is held unlucky! Thou must not invade
Those parts because no Sháh hath thought it good,
Who if less great than thou was still God's slave:
Then do not for the sake of covetise
Plant with the blood of such a famous head
A tree whose growth and fruit will prove a curse,
And break the precedents of former Sháhs."
Káús replied: "I need thy views hereon,
But nathless I in courage, Grace, and treasure
Surpass Jamshíd and Farídún as well
As Minúchihr and Kai Kubád, who never
Made mention of Mázandarán; my heart
And host are greater, and the world is 'neath
My trenchant scimitar. The world was won
When thou didst brandish thine; let it see ours.
I shall go thither, snare them all, maintaining
The credit of myself and scimitar,
Then tax them heavily or leave all dead,
So vile and wretched do I hold that crew V. 324
Of dívs and sorcerers, and thou wilt hear
That earth is void of them. Do thou and Rustam
Be regents of Írán and slumber not.
God is my Helper and the prince of dívs
My quarry. Since thou wilt not go with me
Bid me not dally on my throne."
Zál heard,
And baffled answered: "Thou art Sháh, and we
Are slaves who speak in love and, right or wrong,
Must move and breathe according to thy will.
I have relieved my heart as knowledge prompted.
No one can root out death, sew up the eyes
Of destiny with needles, or escape

From want by abstinence; in this regard
E'en princes must submit. May this bright world
Prove prosperous to thee, and mayst thou never
Have reason to recall these words of mine;
May thine own doings cause thee no remorse,
And be thy heart and Faith and rule resplendent."
Grieved that the Sháh would go Zál took his leave
In haste, and as he left the monarch's presence
Both sun and moon were darkened in his eyes.
The gallant nobles—Tús, Gúdarz, Bahrám,
And Gív—went with him, and Gív said to Zál:—
"May God direct us! Were Káús not Sháh
I should esteem him naught. May greed, death, want,
Be far from thee, foes' hands too short to reach thee.
V. 325 Where'er we be or go we hear thy praises,
And next to God trust thee who hath so toiled
For us."
Thus Gív. Zál, clasping to his heart
The warriors, made ready to depart.

§ 4

How Káús went to Mázandarán

Next day arose the tymbals' din, Gúdarz
And Tús led on the troops. Káús, their lustre,
Went with them, and upon a shaded spot
Set up his throne before Mount Ispurúz
For rest and sleep, while terror everywhere
Fell on the brutish dívs. Upon the heights
The Sháh spread cloth of gold; the air was fragrant
V. 326 With luscious wine; the favoured paladins
Sat by his throne and spent the night together.
At dawn they woke and entered helmed and armed
The presence of the Sháh, who ordered Gív:—
"Choose from the warriors two thousand men—

Mace-wielders—to prepare for us a path
Mázandarán-ward, slaughter young and old,
Fire all the settlements, turn day to night,
And slay the warlocks ere they are aware."
Gív girt him, left the portal of the Sháh,
Chose valiant warriors, and when he reached
Mázandarán showered scimitars and maces.
The women, children, and old men with staves,
Received no quarter from his sword; he sacked
And burned the cities, scattering bane instead
Of antidote. He lighted on a spot
Like Paradise, replete with all delights,
And in each street and quarter countless slaves
With necklaces and earrings, and still more
With casques and faces like the shining moon.
In every place were treasures stored away,
Here gold, there gems. The cattle were past count.
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis Paradise itself!"
They told Káús the news, who cried: "Live happy
The man who said: 'Mázandarán may match V. 327
With Paradise, and thou wouldst say that all
The country is an Idols' temple decked
With wreaths of roses and brocade of Chín;
Its Idols come from Paradise with faces
Bathed in pomegranate-blossoms by Rizwán.'"[1]
The Íránians plundered for one week, then ceased.
The monarch of Mázandarán received
The news; his heart was sad, his head was heavy.
There was a dív named Sanja at the court,
Who also grieved. The monarch said to him:—
"Go swift as Sol in yonder circling heaven
And tell the White Dív: 'There hath come a host
Out of Írán to spoil Mázandarán;
They have burnt up our cities and inflamed
Our vengeance by the outrage. Kai Káús,

[1] The door-keeper of Paradise.

With many young and brave, is in command
Without thy help we shall be all destroyed.'"
When Sanja heard the message he sped forth
And carried to the dív the king's appeal.
The White Dív answered: "Be not in despair,
For I am coming with a mighty host
To cut the Sháh's foot from Mázandarán."
He spake and like a mountain rose erect;
His head was level with the turning sky.
V. 328 Night came, a cloud involved the Íránian host,
The world grew like a negro's face for blackness,
And thou hadst said: "'Tis like a sea of pitch,
And all its light is lost."
V. 329 The White Dív spread
Above their heads a tent of pitchy smoke,
Air dusked and eyes were darkened. From the sky
He showered stones and darts, the Íránian troops
Dispersed abroad, and many sought Írán,
Heart-broken at the doings of Káús.
When day had come the ambitious Sháh and most
Among his warriors were blind. The nobles
Were wroth with him, his troops were prisoners,
His treasures pillaged, and his fortunes old.
It is a ne'er to be forgotten tale,
For at such wonders wonder's self must fail!
Now when the Sháh perceived his plight he said:—
"A prudent minister is more than treasure;
Alas that I accepted not the counsel
Of Zál the worldlord but misdoubted it."
When he had passed seven days in misery
And looked on no Íránian, on the eighth
The White Dív thundered at him: "O thou Sháh,
As fruitless as a willow! thou wouldst have
Complete supremacy and seize our pastures.
Like to a maddened elephant's appeared
Thy strength to thee, thou wouldst not yield to any!

Content not with the crown above thy throne
Thou hast perverted wisdom and hast wrought
Ill in Mázandarán, and slaughtered many
With massive mace. The news of mine achievements V. 330
Perchance ne'er reached thee, such a dullard thou
On thine imperial throne! Now thou hast gained
The fitting outcome of thy heart's desire."
Then of the valiant dívs that drew the sword
He chose twelve thousand. setting them to guard
The Íránians, and afflicted grievously
Those headstrong men. He gave them food enough
To keep them living on from day to day,
While all the treasures of the Sháh and host,
The jewelled diadems and turquoise thrones,
All that he saw, he gave o'er to Arzhang,
The general of Mázandarán, and said:—
"Convey these to the king and say to him:—
'Blame not thou Áhriman, for I have done
All that was needed, and have brought yon folk
To dust. The Sháh and paladins will never
Behold the bright sun or the moon again.
I have not threatened him with death, but taught him
The ups and downs of fortune. He will grow
Wise through his troubles, and hereafter none
Will listen to such schemes.'"
Thereat Arzhang V. 331
Went to the monarch of Mázandarán,
And took with him the treasure and the troops,
The captives and the steeds caparisoned.
This done the White Dív went back to his home
As glorious as the sun, while Kai Káús
Remained within Mázandarán to moan:—
"I was to blame for this and I alone."

§ 5

The Message of Kai Káús to Zál and Rustam

Káús with stricken heart sent to Zábul
To Zál a warrior, like a bird that flew
As swift as smoke, to say: "What hap is mine!
My crown and throne have tumbled to the dust,
And heaven hath given to the dívs my treasures
And troops arrayed like roses in the spring;
The wind, thou wouldst say, rose and bore them off.
Mine eyes are blinded and my fortunes shent,
My crown and throne are both o'erturned, and I
Lie stricken in the hand of Áhriman,
Who rendeth me asunder, soul from body.
I often sigh to think on thine advice,
Which I rejected foolishly, thus causing
The present trouble. If thou dost not act
Both capital and interest will be lost."
He went as 'twere a bird as swift as smoke
And told what he had seen and heard to Zál,
Whose skin burst at the tidings, but he kept
V. 332 The news from friend and foe. His shrewd heart showed him
The ills that fate would bring upon Káús.
"The scimitar is all but out," he said
To Rustam. "We must not thus feed at ease,
But make provision for the crown itself,
Because the Sháh is in the Dragon's breath:
How great a bale is on the Íránians!
Thy part is now to saddle Rakhsh and seek
For vengeance with the world-allotting sword.
God surely made thee for a time like this,
And thou art fitted for such labours now,
While I, I have outlived two centuries!
Thou wilt gain high renown and save the Sháh.

Thou must not in this Áhriman's own business
Take matters leisurely or stop to breathe,
But don the tiger-skin and purge thy head
Of sleep and thought. When one hath seen thy spear
Will any say: 'His soul will rest?' If thou
Shouldst fight the sea 'twould turn to blood, thy voice
Will level mountains. Thou must make Arzhang,
And the White Dív no less, despair of life.
As for the monarch of Mázandarán
Go smash him, neck and spine, with thy great mace."
He answered thus: "The way is long, and I . . . V. 333
How shall I go to take revenge?"
Said Zál:—
"There are two routes both hard and dangerous;
One, which is long, was taken by Káús;
The other is a journey of two weeks,
The haunt of dív and lion, and all gloom;
Its murk will maze thine eyes. Choose thou the short,
And see its wonders; God will be thine aid.
What though the way be hard? An end will come,
The feet of glorious Rakhsh will traverse it,
And I will pray all night to see again
Thy limbs and iron mace; while if the Worldlord
Shall let the dívs' grip close upon thy life,
Who can resist His word? 'Tis said and done.
None can abide here though he tarry long,
And one whose fame embraceth all the world
Is not cast down at going."
Rustam answered:—
"I gird me to obey although the great
Of yore walked not to Hell advisedly,
And only one grown sick of life will counter
The rending lion. Think of me as girt
And gone. I ask no help but God's, will give
Both soul and body for the Sháh, and break
The talismans that guard those sorcerers.

All that survive among the Íránians there
Will I bring back and gird their loins again;
I will not spare the White Dív nor Arzhang,
Nor Sanja nor Púlád son of Ghundí,
V. 334 Nor Bíd. I swear by God, the only God,
Not to quit Rakhsh till I have bound Arzhang
With yoke on neck and hands as firm as rocks,
Have trod the brains and headpiece of Púlád,
And shaken earth beneath the feet of Rakhsh."
He donned the tiger-skin and stretched himself,
While Zál called many blessings down on him,
Then mounted on his elephantine steed
With steadfast heart and mien. Rúdába came
With tearful cheeks while Zál too wept. She said:—
"So thou wilt go and leave me here to grieve!
How canst thou hope in God?"
He said: "Good mother!
I did not choose my course; 'tis destiny.
Do thou commit to God my soul and body."
The people came to him to say farewell;
Who knew if he should look on Rustam more?
Uncounted by the wise the moments fly,
And, when an evil day hath passed thee, try
To reckon that the world hath gained thereby.

THE SEVEN COURSES OF RUSTAM

§ 6

The First Course

How Rakhsh fought with a Lion

V. 335 Then Rustam, that world-brightening paladin,
Departed from his sire and, treating night
Like day, made two days' journey into one,

Not giving Rakhsh repose. Now as his body
Failed him through lack of food he reached a plain
Where onager abounded, and urged Rakhsh
To whom their speed was slow: no beast could 'scape
From Rustam's lasso and his horse's feet.
The Lion with his royal lasso caught
A gallant onager and, striking sparks
Upon an arrow's point, enkindled fire
With stubble, thorns, and wood to roast the beast.
He ate the flesh and threw away the bones;
The onager itself was pot and tray.
He spied some pasture, slipped off Rakhsh's bridle,
Turned him out loose upon the meadow-land,
And made himself a couch within a reed-bed;
He deemed it safe though it was fear's own door,
For in it was a lion's lair; no elephant
Dared pluck a reed. One watch passed, then the lion v. 336
Came boldly forth and was amazed to see
An elephantine form among the reeds,
Reposing with a charger standing by.
"First," said the lion, "I must maim the steed,
Then I can take the rider when I please."
He sprang at glossy Rakhsh, who raged like fire
And lashed out at the lion's head, then fixed
His sharp teeth in its back and dashed the beast
To pieces by a shift that made it shiftless.
When Rustam, deft of hand, awoke and saw
How earth was straitened to that ravening beast
He said: "O foolish Rakhsh! who bade thee fight
A lion? Hadst thou perished 'neath its claws
Could I have carried to Mázandarán
My helmet, tiger-skin, bow, lasso, sword,
And massive mace? Had my sweet sleep been broken
Thy combat with the lion had been brief."
He slept and rested long, and when the sun

Rose o'er the darksome hills awoke still drowsy;
He rubbed down Rakhsh and saddled him, then prayed
To God, the Author of all good, for aid.

§ 7

The Second Course

How Rustam found a Spring

He had to face all dizzy as he was
A desert waterless, a heat intense
That dried the birds to powder; plain and waste
v. 337 Were as they had been scorched thou wouldst have said.
Rakhsh was exhausted, while his rider's tongue
Failed through the heat and drought, and Rustam, clutching
A double-headed dart, went staggering
Like one bemused, and saw no means of safety.
He looked up saying: "O all-righteous Judge!
Thou bring'st all toil and hardship on my head,
And if Thou findest pleasure in my pains
My hoard is great indeed! I fare in hope
That God will grant deliverance to the Sháh,
And that the Ruler of the world will free
The Íránians from the clutches of the Dív,
Unscathed. They sinned, and Thou hast cast them out,
But still they are Thy slaves and worshippers."
v. 338 This said, that elephantine form became
Weak and distraught with thirst, and fell, with tongue
All cracked and blistered, on the burning dust.
Anon a well-fed ram passed by. The hero
On seeing thought: "Where is its watering-place?
In sooth God's mercy is extended to me!"
Then in the Worldlord's strength rose to his feet
And followed up the ram, with scimitar

In one hand while the other grasped the reins,
Until he saw the spring, for thither went
That stately ram. Then Rustam looked toward heaven,
And said: "O Judge, that ever speakest sooth!
The ram hath left no tracks about the spring!
It is no desert-sheep of flesh and blood!"
When hardships press on thee, in thy concern
Flee unto God, the Just One; they who turn
Away from Him have wisdom still to learn.
He blessed that ram and said: "Ne'er may mishap
From circling heaven be thine; green be thy pastures;
May cheetah never mark thee for its prey;
Snapped be the bow and dark the soul of him
That shooteth at thee who hath rescued Rustam,
Else were he thinking of his shroud; but now
He is not in the mighty dragon's maw
As yet, or in the clutches of the wolf,
So that the fragments of his clothes and limbs
Should serve as tokens to his enemies."
His praises offered he unsaddled Rakhsh, V. 339
Washed him, and made him shining as the sun.
Then Rustam much refreshed filled up his quiver
And as he hunted dropped an onager
Huge as an elephant, removed the entrails,
The hide, and feet, lit up a blazing fire,
And having washed the carcase roasted it.
This done he feasted, breaking up the bones,
And having quenched his thirst prepared for sleep.
He said to Rakhsh: "Fight not and make no friends.
If any foe approacheth run to me,
But venture not to counter dívs and lions."
He lay and slept, his lips in silence bound,
While Rakhsh till midnight grazed and strayed around.

§ 8

The Third Course

How Rustam fought with a Dragon

A dragon, such an one as, thou hadst said,
No elephant could 'scape, came from the waste.
Its haunt was there; no dív dared pass thereby.
It came, beheld the atheling asleep,
A charger near him, and was wroth. It thought:—
"What do I see? Who dareth to sleep here?"
Because no lions, dívs, or elephants
Dared pass that way or, if they did, escaped not
The clutches of that dragon fierce and fell.
V. 340 It turned on glossy Rakhsh, who ran to Rustam,
Stamped with his brazen hoofs upon the ground,
Whisked with his tail, and gave a thundering neigh.
The hero woke up furious, looked about
Upon the waste, perceived not that fell dragon,
And wreaked his wrath on Rakhsh for waking him.
He slept again, again the worm approached
Out of the gloom; Rakhsh ran to Rustam's couch,
And kicked the earth about and trampled it.
The sleeper woke, his cheeks rose-red with passion,
Looked round and, seeing nothing but the gloom,
Said to affectionate and watchful Rakhsh:—
"Thou canst not blink the darkness of the night
Yet wakest me again impatiently!
If thou disturb me more I will behead thee
With my sharp scimitar, and carry it,
My helmet, and my massive mace, on foot.
I said: 'Should any lion come at thee
I will encounter it.' I never said:—
'Rush on me in the night!' Leave me to slumber."
Then for the third time with his tiger-skin

Upon his breast he set himself to sleep.
The fearsome dragon roared and, thou hadst said,
Breathed fire. Rakhsh left the pasturage forthwith,
But dared not to approach the paladin.
Yet was his heart distracted by his fears
For Rustam with that dragon, till at length,
O'ermastered by affection for his lord,
He rushed swift as a blast to Rustam's side
And neighed and fretted, pawed upon the ground, V. 341
And stamped the earth to pieces with his hoofs.
Then Rustam, wakened from his sweet repose,
Raged at his docile steed; but now the Maker
Willed that the dragon should be seen, and Rustam,
Perceiving it amid the gloom, unsheathed
The keen sword at his girdle, thundered out
Like spring-clouds, and filled earth with battle-fire.
Then said he to the dragon: "Tell thy name;
Earth is no longer thine, yet must not I
Rob thy dark form of life, thy name untold."
The laidly dragon said: "None scapeth me.
For centuries this waste hath been my home,
And mine its firmament; no eagle dareth
To fly across or star to dream thereof."
It further said: "What is thy name, for she
Will have to weep that bare thee?"
"I am Rustam,"
He answered, "sprung from Zál—the son of Sám—
And Narímán withal. I am myself
A host, and trample earth 'neath dauntless Rakhsh.
Thou shalt behold my prowess; I will lay
Thy head in dust."
The dragon closed with him,
And in the end escaped not though it strove
So fiercely with the elephantine hero
That thou hadst said: "He will be worsted." Rakhsh,
On seeing the dragon's might, and how it battled

With Rustam, laid his ears back, joined the fray,
Bit at the dragon's shoulders, tore its hide
As though he were a lion, and amazed
The valiant paladin, who with keen glaive
Smote off the dragon's head; blood jetted out
In rivers, and its carcase hid the earth.
V. 342 The matchless one, astonied at the sight,
Invoked God's name and bathed him in the spring.
Desiring conquest through God's strength alone
He said: "O righteous Judge! me Thou hast given
Grace, might, and wisdom; what care I for lion,
Dív, elephant, parched desert, and blue sea?
When I am wroth all foes are one to me."

§ 9

The Fourth Course

How Rustam slew a Witch

Thanksgivings done, he harnessed rose-cheeked Rakhsh
And mounting came in time where sorcerers dwelt.
Long had he fared and saw, as Sol declined,
Trees, grass, and stream—the very spot for youth.
There was a spring as bright as pheasant's eyes;
Beside it were a golden bowl of wine,
A roasted mountain-sheep with bread thereon,
And salts and sweetmeats. Rustam thanked the Lord
For showing him a place so opportune,
Dismounted from his steed, took off the saddle,
And marvelled at the loaves and venison.
V. 343 It was a sorcerers' meal, and when he came
His voice had caused those dívs to disappear.
He sat beside the rushy stream and brimmed
A jewelled cup with wine. A dainty lute

Was there, the desert seemed a banquet-hall!
He took the lute up, touched the chords, and sang: —

"Oh! Rustam is an outcast still
And hath no days of pleasure,
Marked out for every kind of ill
And not a moment's leisure.

"Be where he may it is his plight
With battle still to harden,
And wilderness and mountain-height
Must serve him for a garden.

"His combatings are never done
And there is no assuagement,
'Tis dragon, dív, and desert—one
Perpetual engagement!

"The wine and cup, the scented rose,
And where lush herbage groweth—
Such things are not at his dispose,
These fortune ne'er bestoweth

"On one that with the crocodile
Is still engaged in fighting,
Save when the leopard for a while
The combat is inviting."

The sound of music reached a witch's ears;
She made her cheeks like spring, although by rights
She was not fair, and then, perfumed and decked,
Approached, saluted, and sat down by Rustam,
Who gave God thanks at finding in the desert
Board, wine, and lute, and youthful boon-companion.
Not knowing that she was a wicked witch,
An Áhriman beneath her bravery,

He handed her a cup of wine, invoking
The Giver of all good. Now when he named
The Lord of love her favour changed; no soul
Had she for gratitude, no tongue for praise,
But blackened at God's name, while Rustam, flinging
His lasso quicker than the wind, ensnared,
And questioned her: "What art thou? Speak and show
Thy proper favour."
In the lasso's coils
There was a fetid hag all guile and wrinkle,
V. 344 Calamitous. He clave her with his blade
And made the hearts of sorcerers afraid.

§ 10

The Fifth Course

How Rustam took Úlád captive

He journeyed on and reached a place of gloom
Black as a negro's face—a murky night
Without a star or moon; thou wouldst have said:—
"The sun is captive and the stars are lassoed!"
He gave the rein to Rakhsh and journeyed on,
Not seeing height or river for the murk.
When he emerged to light he saw a land,
Like painted silk with crops, where all was verdure
And streams; the old world had renewed its youth.
His clothes were drenched, and longing for repose
He took off his cuirass of tiger-skin,
And dripping helm, to dry them in the sun,
Unbridled Rakhsh, and loosed him in the corn,
Then, donning his dried helmet and his breastplate,
Couched like a mighty lion in the grass,
His shield his pillow and his hand on hilt.
The watchman of the plain, on seeing Rakhsh
Among the crops, ran up with hue and cry;
He smote the hero smartly with a stick

Upon the foot and said, as Rustam woke:—
"O Áhriman! why didst thou loose thy steed
Among the corn to eat where others toiled?"
But Rustam, angered, seized the watchman's ears,
Wrung them and tore them off without a word.
The watchman howled and snatched them up, aghast V. 345
At Rustam. Now Úlád was marchlord there—
A brave and famous youth. To him the watchman
Went howling with his hands and head all bloody,
And ears wrung off, and said: "There is a man,
Like the Black Dív, with leopard-skin cuirass
And iron casque, a perfect Áhriman,
Or else a dragon was asleep in mail!
I went to drive his charger from the corn,
He would not suffer it but, when he saw me,
Rose without word, wrung off mine ears, and slept!"
Úlád was hunting there with other nobles,
But when he heard the watchman and beheld
The Lion's track in his preserves, they rode
Toward where the peerless Rustam had been seen
To find out who he was, and why he served
The watchman of the plain so scurvily.
Úlád in threatening wise drew near to Rustam,
Who mounted Rakhsh, unsheathed his trenchant sword,
And then came onward like a thunder-cloud.
As they drew near they questioned one another.
"What is thy name?" Úlád cried. "Who art thou?
Who is thy king and who is backing thee?
Hence is no passage to the warrior-dívs.
Why didst thou tear away the watchman's ears
And turn thy charger loose among the corn?
Just so will I make black the world to thee
And lay thy helm in dust."
"My name is 'Cloud,'" [1] V. 346
Said Rustam, "if a cloud hath lion's claws,

[1] Cf. p. 13.

With swords and maces only for its fruit,
And beareth on its lap the heads of chieftains.
My real name, should it reach thine ears, would freeze
Thy life's breath and heart's blood. Hast thou not heard
Of the elephantine warrior's bow and lasso
In every company? We call the mothers
Of sons like thee shroud-stitchers, wailing-women.
Thou comest thus against me with a troop,
But only throwest walnuts on a dome."
With that he drew his baleful Crocodile,
Hung his coiled lasso to the saddle-bow,
Came like a lion midst a flock, and slew
All that were in his reach. At every stroke
He sheared two chieftains' heads and strewed the dust
Beneath his feet therewith. The troops thus broken
Fled in dismay, and wilderness and dale
Were filled with dust-clouds by the cavaliers
As they dispersed among the rocks and hollows.
Then Rustam, like an elephant enraged,
With sixty coils of lasso on his arm,
Pressed forward and, when Rakhsh was near Úlád,
Whose day was darkened, flung his mighty lasso,
Ensnared that chieftain's head, and then alighting
Made fast his hands, drave him in front and, mounting,
Said: "If thou speak the truth, and if I find
No guile at all in thee from first to last,
If thou wilt show me where the White Dív dwelleth,
Where dwell Púlád son of Ghundí and Bíd,
And where Káús, who caused these ills, is bound;
V. 347 If thou dost show this truly and art faithful,
Then from the monarch of Mázandarán
Will I take crown and throne and massive mace,
And thou shalt be the ruler of the land;
But if thy words prove guileful I will make
Thine eyes run blood."
Úlád said: "Be not wroth,

But gracious just for once and slay me not
In wantonness, and I will answer thee.
I will point out to thee the roads and city
Wherein Káús is bound, the White Dív's dwelling
And Bíd's, since thou hast reassured my heart.
Know, O thou worshipful dív-hearted hero!
That God hath fashioned thee of noble clay!
There are between us now and Kai Káús
A hundred leagues, O thou of gracious feet!
Whence to the White Dív is another hundred.
The road is bad and dangerous, through a gorge—
A fearful spot o'er which no eagle flieth.
There is a cavern midst two hundred others,
A wondrous place beyond all measurement,
And there twelve thousand warriors, all dívs,
Keep watch by night upon the mountain-top;
Their captain is Púlád son of Ghundí,
While Bíd and Sanja are their outpost-guards.
Of all the dívs the White Dív is the chief;
At him the mountains shake like willow-leaves,
And thou wilt find his person mountain-tall,
With shoulders, breast, and neck ten cords across.
E'en with such arms and hands and reins as thine,
And though thou brandishest sword, mace, and spear,
And hast such stature, mien, and energy,
It is not well for thee to fight that dív.
Beyond are rocks that no gazelle could pass,
And then a river two leagues wide and more V. 348
Watched by the dív in charge of all that province
With all the other dívs at his command.
Call it three hundred leagues to the Narmpái[1]
From the Buzgúsh,[2] whence to Mázandarán
The journey is a foul and tedious one.

[1] The name of a tribe, "the Bandy-legged"; *ἱμαντόποδες*, loripedes. Cf. p. 63.

[2] The name of a tribe, "the Goat-ears."

A myriad of cavaliers at least
Are posted through the realm, so armed and paid
That thou wilt not see one dissatisfied.
There are twelve hundred elephants of war;
The city cannot hold them. Thou'rt but one,
Though iron, and but gratest on the file
Of Áhriman."
The words made Rustam laugh.
"If thou wilt be my comrade," he replied,
"Thou shalt see how one elephantine chief
Will treat yon famous band by help of God,
The Prosperer, and fortune, arms, and prowess.
When they behold my might of breast and neck,
And mace-blows in the fight, their feet and hides
Will burst in sheer dismay, they will not know
A stirrup from a rein; so point me out
Káús, where'er he be, and step along."
This said, he sprang on Rakhsh, while swift as wind
Úlád ran on beside him, day or night
Not resting till he reached Mount Ispurúz,
Where dívs and warlocks had o'erthrown Káús.
At midnight shoutings went up from the plain,
The folk lit watch-fires in Mázandarán
And torches everywhere. Then matchless Rustam
Asked of Úlád: "What is the cause that fires
Are springing up to right and left of us?"
"It is the entrance to Mázandarán,"
Úlád replied. "The more part of each night
V. 349 None dareth sleep; the dív Arzhang is there
And he is ever noisy."
Rustam slept
Till dawn, then took Úlád, bound him in anguish
Against a tree, and, hanging on the saddle
The mace his grandsire had been wont to use,
Departed confident and full of ruse.

§ 11

The Sixth Course

How Rustam fought with the Dív Arzhang

In royal helm and sweat-soaked tiger-skin
He sought, intent on fight, the chief Arzhang,
And shouted in the middle of the host;
Thou wouldst have said: "The hills and seas are rent!"
The dív Arzhang came leaping from the camp
At that tremendous shout, while Rustam spurring
Came on him like Ázargashasp, grasped boldly
His head and ears and neck, then lion-like
Tore off his head and flung it at his troops.
The dívs' hearts burst in terror at the sight
Of Rustam's iron mace, and son and sire,
Forgetting land and crops, went off pell mell,
While Rustam drew his vengeful scimitar
And cleared the neighbourhood. At set of sun
He made all speed back to Mount Ispurúz,
Untied Úlád, and, as they sat beneath
The lofty tree, asked how to reach the city V. 350
Where Sháh Káús was, and then hurried on
Led by Úlád afoot. When he arrived
Rakhsh gave a thundering neigh, which Kai Káús,
Who heard it, understood and told the Íránians:—
"Our evil days are all but over now;
I heard the neigh of Rakhsh; it made my heart
And spirit young. Thus neighed he in the wars
Of Kai Kubád against the Turkman king."
The soldiers said: "His mind hath gone through hardship,
And he hath lost his wisdom, sense, and Grace!
Thou wouldest say: 'He talketh in his sleep.'

But in these grievous bonds we can do naught;
In good sooth fortune hath abandoned us."
Anon that ardent lover of the fray,
The elephantine chief, approached Káús,
And all the noble paladins—Gúdarz,
Tús, gallant Gív, Bahrám the Lion, Shídúsh,
And Gustaham—flocked round while Rustam wept
Right sorely, did obeisance to the Sháh,
And asked about his longsome toils. Káús,
Embracing him, inquired concerning Zál,
And all his travail, then said privily:—
"Let not these sorcerers get sight of Rakhsh,
For when the White Dív is apprised: 'Arzhang
Is dead and Rustam is with Kai Káús!'
The valiant dívs will gather, earth will teem
With them, and then thy toils will bear no fruit.
Seek the White Dív's abode, exert thyself
V. 351 With sword and arrow; holy God may aid thee
In bringing to the dust these sorcerers' heads.
O'er seven mountains must thou pass, and troops
Of dívs throng everywhere. At length a cavern
Of frightful aspect will appear before thee,
A fearsome place, as I have heard: the approach
Is held by warrior-dívs equipped like pards
For fight. That cavern is the White Dív's home:
He is the hope and terror of his troops.
May'st thou have strength to put an end to him
Because he is that army's chief and stay.
My soldiers' eyes are blinded by their griefs;
I am in darkness too. Our leeches trust
To blood extracted from the White Dív's vitals,
In which regard a wise physician said:—
'Let three drops of his blood descend like tears
Upon the eyes and it will banish blindness.'"
He made him ready, and in setting forth
Spake thus to the Íránians: "Be alert,

For 'tis the White Dív that I go against—
That Elephant of war, full of resource,
And compassed by a host of warriors.
If he shall catch my body with his noose
A shameful sorry plight will long be yours,
But if the Lord and my good star shall aid me
Our country and our throne will we restore,
And this our royal Tree shall fruit once more."

§ 12

The Seventh Course

How Rustam slew the White Dív

He went girt up—all battle and revenge;
He took Úlád and made Rakhsh go like wind. v. 352
As soon as Rakhsh had reached the seven mountains,
With all their troops of valiant dívs, the chieftain
Drew near the abysmal cave, saw them on guard,
And spake thus to Úlád: "Thou hast been faithful,
So now that we must act point out the way."
Úlád made answer: "When the sun is hot
The dívs will sleep and thou wilt overcome them;
So bide thy time and thou wilt see no dívs,
Except some few on duty, and may'st triumph
If He that giveth victory shall aid thee."
So Rustam paused till noon, then, having bound
Úlád fast with the lasso, mounted Rakhsh,
Unsheathed his warlike Crocodile, and shouted
His name like thunder, came like flying dust
Among the troops, and parted heads from trunks.
None sought for glory by withstanding him.
Thence radiant as the sun he went to seek
The White Dív, found a pit like Hell, but saw not
The sorcerer for the murk. There sword in hand

He paused; no room was there for fight or flight.
V. 353 He rubbed his eyelids, bathed his eyes, and searched
The cave till in the gloom he saw a Mountain
That blotted all within, with sable face
And hair like lion's mane—a world to see!
Now Rustam hasted not to slay the dív
Asleep, but roused him with a leopard's roar.
He charged at Rustam, like a gloomy mountain
With iron helm and brassards, seized a millstone
And drave at him like smoke. The hero quailed,
And thought: "Mine end is come!" Yet like a lion
Enraged he struck full at the dív and lopped
From that enormous bulk a hand and foot,
So mighty was he with his trenchant sword!
As 'twere some lofty-crested elephant
And lion in its wrath the maimed dív closed
With Rustam, and one-footed wrecked the cave.
They wrestled, tearing out each other's flesh,
Till all the ground was puddled with their blood,
And Rustam thought: "If I survive this day
I ne'er shall die."
The White Dív also thought:—
"Life hath no hopes for me, for, should I scape
This Dragon's claws, maimed as I am and torn,
None great or small within Mázandarán
Will look at me."
Such was his wretched comfort!
But still they wrestled, streaming blood and sweat,
V. 354 While elephantine Rustam in God's strength
Strove mightily in anguish and revenge,
Till sore bestead, bold Lion that he was,
He reached out, clutched the dív, raised him neck-high,
And dashed the life-breath from him on the ground,
Then with a dagger stabbed him to the heart

And plucked the liver from his swarthy form :
The carcase filled the cave, and all the world
Was like a sea of blood. Then Rustam freed
Úlád, put back the lasso in the straps,
And, giving him the liver of the dív
To carry, went back to Sháh Kai Káús.
"O Lion!" said Úlád, "thou hast subdued V. 355
The world beneath thy sword, and I myself
On my bruised body bears thy lasso's marks,
So now I hope that thou wilt keep thy promise,
For lion-fierceness and a royal mien
Sort not with broken faith."
"I give thee all
Mázandarán," he answered. "I have yet
Long toils before me, many ups and downs,
For I must hale its monarch from his throne
And fling him in a ditch, behead a myriad
Of sorcerer-dívs with my relentless sword,
And then, it may be, tread the ground again,[1]
But if not I will still keep faith with thee."
He reached Káús while all in gladness cried:—
"The chief of ardent spirit hath returned!"
And ran to him with thanks and praise past count.
He said: "O Sháh, thou seeker after knowledge!
Rejoice, thy foe is slain. I have ripped out V. 356
The White Dív's liver, and his king hath naught
To hope from him. What would my lord the Sháh?"
Káús blessed Rustam. "Ne'er may crown and host
Lack thee," he said. "The mother of such offspring
Must not be mentioned but in terms of praise.
Now may a thousand blessings be on Zál,
And on the country of Zábulistán,
Because they have produced so brave a chief.
In sooth the age hath not beheld thy like,

[1] In war-time he would ride, and he had sworn to ride till he had triumphed. Cf. p. 44.

But brighter still is my lot since I have
For liege this lion-slaying Elephant."
When he had made an end of praise he said:—
"O warrior of blesséd steps! now put
The White Dív's blood upon mine eyes and those
Of all my folk; God willing, we may see
Thy face again."
They anointed his dim eyes,
Which grew as bright as Sol, and forthwith Rustam
Anointed all the others with the blood.
Their eyes grew bright, and all the world to them
A rosary. They hung the crown and set
Káús beneath it on an ivory throne
As monarch of Mázandarán, with Rustam,
Tús, Faríburz, Gúdarz, Ruhhám, and Gív,
Gurgín, and brave Bahrám. One week he revelled,
The eighth day mounted with his chiefs and troops,
Who spread themselves like fire among dry reeds
Throughout the land and plied the massive mace
According to the bidding of the Sháh.
They scorched the realm with their keen scimitars,
V. 357 And of the warlocks slew so many that blood
Flowed in a river. When night fell the warriors
All rested and Káús proclaimed: "The wrong
Hath been avenged, the dívs have their deserts,
'Tis time to cease from slaughter. Now we need
A man of weight and sense, with sense to wait
Yet prompt, to work upon and overawe
The monarch of Mázandarán."
The son
Of Zál and all the other chiefs agreed
On this that such a letter should be sent
To give his darkened mind enlightenment.

§ 13

How Káús wrote to the King of Mázandarán

A skilled scribe wrote upon white silk a letter
Both kind and harsh, inspiring hope and fear,
First praising God, the Source of every good,
"Who gave man wisdom, made the turning sky,
Revealing hardship, cruelty, and love,
Who gave to us to compass good and ill,
And ruleth o'er the circling sun and moon. . . .
If thou art upright and thy Faith is pure V. 358
All men will praise thee, but the curse of heaven
Will fall on thee if ill-disposed and hurtful.
If God is just why should His laws be broken?
Observe how He in punishment for sin
Is sending dust from dív and sorcerer!
So now if news hath reached thee of their fate,
And mind and wisdom are thy monitors,
Quit thou thy throne and from Mázandarán
Come, like our other subjects, to our court,
And, as thou canst not strive with Rustam, pay
Such tax and tribute as we may demand.
Thus haply thou mayst still retain thy throne;
But if thou wilt not pay despair of life,
E'en as the White Dív and Arzhang despaired."
The letter done, the Sháh affixed his seal
Of musk and spicery, and called Farhád—
Him of the mace of steel, a favourite
Among the nobles of the land, and one
Who had not shared the warfare and the toil—
To whom he said: "Convey to yonder dív
Escaped from bonds this letter of advice."
He kissed the ground, bare the Sháh's letter forth,
And reached the valiant horsemen, the Narmpái.[1]
The people there with leathern feet appear,

[1] Cf. p. 55.

Hence their nickname Narmpái for many a year.
There lived among his chiefs and men of war
The monarch of Mázandarán of yore.
Farhád sent on a man to tell the king
Of his approach and business, who on hearing :—
"A prudent envoy cometh from the Sháh,"
Sent forward to receive him a great host,
V. 359 Selected by the king to show his power,
To whom he said: "We must make known to-day
How great the difference is 'twixt man and dív,
So act the pard and get these sages' leader
Within your clutches that he may repent
Himself in terror at the sight of you."
They went forth frowning but their purpose failed.
On coming to Farhád one of the chiefs—
A mighty man—took hold upon his hand,
Wrung it, and pained him, yet he did not blench,
Or flush. They carried him before the king,
Who asked about Káús and that long journey,
Then set the document before a scribe,
And sprinkled wine and musk upon the silk.
He read the letter to the king who writhed;
But when he heard of Rustam and the dív
Blood filled his eyes, his heart throbbed, and he thought:—
"'Tis sunset and night cometh, 'tis the time
For rest, but Rustam will not let earth rest,
His name will always be in evidence."
He mourned Arzhang and the White Dív, the slaying
Of Bíd and of Púlád son of Ghundí,
Then entertained the envoy for three days
Among the warriors and men of name,
And on the fourth said: "Go back to the Sháh,
That witless youth, and bear to him this answer:—
'Is wine unmingled in the cup of fortune?
V. 360 Am I such that thou sayest: "Quit thy land,

Thy throne and country, and attend my court?"
My court is more exalted than thine own,
Mine are a thousand thousand troops and more,
And wheresoe'er they turn them in the fight
They leave not stone or colour or perfume.
Prepare thyself forthwith; I shall be ready;
I will lead forth an army lion-like
And rouse those heads of yours from their sweet slumbers.
I have twelve hundred elephants of war,
While thou hast none, and I will send dark dust
Up from Írán till hills and vales seem one.'"
Farhád, perceiving his defiance, pride,
And arrogance, was much concerned to get
An answer to the letter, hastened back,
And told the Sháh what he had seen and heard:—
"The king is higher than heaven and his purpose
Is not less high. He would not listen to me;
The world is nothing worth in his regard."
Thereat Káús called Rustam and repeated
Farhád's report. The Elephantine said:—
"I will relieve our nation from disgrace;
Let me bear back this answer: 'I will draw
My trenchant sword.' We need a trenchant letter,
A message like a thundering cloud. Myself
Will go to him as envoy; at my words V. 361
The rivers shall run blood."
The Sháh replied:—
"The signet and the crown gain light from thee,
Who art at once ambassador, bold Tiger,
And haughty Lion of the battlefield."
With that he called a scribe, whose pen he made
An arrowhead, and wrote: "Such talk is futile
And cometh ill from one of sober sense.
If thou canst purge thy head of arrogance
Do as thou art commanded like a slave.

Thou wilt not wreck thy realm but pay me tribute
Unvexed by war, enjoy Mázandarán,
And 'scape with life from Rustam; but if thou
Refusest I will march upon thee, stretch
My host from sea to sea, and then the soul
Of thy malevolent White Dív will bring
The vultures to enjoy thy brains, O king!"

§ 14

How Rustam went on an Embassy to the King of Mázandarán

The letter sealed, aspiring Rustam flung
His mace upon the saddle and approached
V. 362 Mázandarán, whose monarch heard: "Káús
Hath sent another letter and an envoy—
One like a savage lion—with a lasso
Of sixty coils within the straps. Beneath him
There is a speedy charger; one would say:—
'It bulketh like a mighty elephant.'"
On hearing this the king selected chiefs
And bade them go to meet this savage Lion.
As Rustam saw them he beheld beside
The road a spreading tree, seized on two branches,
And twisting round the tree with might and main
Uprooted it, himself unscathed the while,
Then poised it like a dart, while all the troops
Looked on astound. As they came up he hurled
The tree, whose boughs hid many cavaliers.
One of the chiefest of Mázandarán
Seized Rustam's hand and squeezed it to assay
His fortitude in pain, but Rustam laughed
While all the company looked on in wonder,
And as he laughed he crushed the other's hand.
That strength-assayer lost all strength himself,
Paled, and fell off his steed. One went before

And told the monarch of Mázandarán
That which had chanced. There was a cavalier
Hight Kaláhúr, whose fame rang through the land,
And who, like some fierce pard, loved fighting only.
The king, who mightily esteemed his valour,
Called him and sent him forth to counter Rustam,
Thus saying: "Meet the envoy, give fresh proofs V. 363
Of prowess, shame him, make him weep hot tears."
So Kaláhúr came lion-like to Rustam
With louring looks and with a leopard's greeting,
Then took and squeezed the Elephantine's hand
Till it turned blue with pain, who bore it lightly,
As holding manhood's patent from the sun,
And stoutly wrung the hand of Kaláhúr,
Whose nails fell off like leaves. He went and showed
The king his mangled hand. "I cannot hide,"
He said, "the anguish that I feel. Enjoy
Thyself in peace; thou canst not fight this hero.
If he is willing let us pay the tribute,
Submitting to preserve Mázandarán,
And portion out the tax to great and small
To make this heavy travail light; 'tis better
Than quaking for our lives."
The matchless Rustam
That moment came like some fierce elephant
Before the king who, seeing him, assigned him
A place of honour, asked about Káús,
The host, the travail of the longsome road,
Its ups and downs, and then said: "Thou art Rustam;
Thy breast and arm befit a paladin."
He said: "I am a slave if fit to serve.
Where Rustam, that brave paladin, is present
There I am useless. Since God made the world V. 364
A chief so eminent hath not appeared.
In fight he is a mountain. What and how
Am I to speak about his mace and Rakhsh?

What army can withstand him when he warreth?
He maketh mountains seas, and seas like mountains.
What lion, elephant, or dív will raise
The battle-cry against him when he fighteth?
He is a noble army in himself
And not a messenger; 'twas he that sent me
To say: 'If thou are prudent sow not seed
Of evil. Thou hast sown it in abundance,
And lightly left the path of manliness.
How hast thou used the monarch of Írán,
His troops, and paladins in thy revenge?
Thou hast not heard perchance of Rustam's name,
Who hath the welkin for his meanest thrall;
But if I had permission from the Sháh
To come to this thy folk I would not leave
One of thy host alive, and thine own head
Should be upon a spear.'"
He gave the letter—
A message from ambition to self-will—
And said: "The scimitar is bearing fruit,
It beareth on its lap the heads of nobles."
The king when he had heard the embassage,
And read the letter, was displeased and marvelled.
He spake to Rustam, saying: "To what end
Are all these frivolous demands of thine?
Say to Káús: 'Thou art indeed the Sháh,
But, though thou hast the heart and claws of lions,
Still I am monarch of Mázandarán,
Possess a host, sit on the golden throne,
And wear the crown. To summon me absurdly
Before thee thus is neither right nor royal.
Think, and ambition not the thrones of kings,
For in the quest dishonour will befall thee.
Ride thou Íránward or a lance's point
Shall end thy days. If I lead forth my host
v. 365 Thou'lt know not head from foot. 'Tis thy conceit;

Be wise and cast away thy bow, for when
We meet thy talk and violence will cease.'
Say too for me to Rustam: 'Famous chief!
Whatever Kai Káús may give to thee
I will bestow a hundred to his one,
Will make thee chief of chiefs, rich past desire,
Exalt thy head above the sun and moon,
And give to thee command of all my troops.'"
  But Rustam, with his shrewd mind contemplating
Throne, host, and court, esteemed the king's speech
    brainless.
Such insults angered him, and he replied:—
"O witless king! good sooth thy fortunes lour!
Hath Rustam, that exalted paladin,
Need of thy treasury and of thy troops?
The son of Zál is monarch of Nímrúz
And hath no peer; so cease to wag thy tongue
Or he will pluck it out."
                The king was wroth;
His evil nature turned his thoughts to bloodshed
He cried: "Arrest the envoy in my presence,
Disseat him and behead him."
                Instantly
An executioner approached the throne
To seize his wrists and hale him from his seat,
But Rustam, roaring like a lion, caught
The executioner's wrists and dragged him close,
Then flung him down and, holding one foot fast,
Set his own foot upon the other one
And rent the man asunder! None e'er saw V. 366
A sight like that! Then noble Rustam cried:—
"If I had but permission from the Sháh
To war against thine army I would put thee
This instant into pitiable plight."
  He spake and went forth from the court, his eyes
Like bowls of blood, while quaking at his words

And might the king made ready royal gifts
Of raiment, steeds, and gold, and proffered them
To Rustam, but he would accept of naught,
Because such presents would involve disgrace,
And left the country of Mázandarán,
Concerned at these grave doings. Full of vengeance,
And in hot blood, he came before the Sháh,
Told his experience in Mázandarán,
And said to him: "Be not concerned one whit,
Show courage and prepare to fight the dívs.
I do not value them a single grain
Of dust, and I will make this mace their bane."

§ 15

How Káús fought with the King of Mázandarán

When Rustam left, the king of sorcerers
Prepared for war, brought out his tent-enclosure,
And led the whole host forth upon the waste;
Their dust hid sun and desert, plain and mountain,
While earth reeled 'neath the tramp of elephants.
v. 367 He marched like rushing wind. Káús on hearing,
"The dívs' host is in sight," first ordered Rustam
To arm for fight and then to Tús, Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, and to Gurgín and Gív,
Those men of noble lineage, he gave
The arraying of the host, the ordering
Of spear and shield. They pitched the camp-enclosures
Upon the deserts of Mázandarán.
Upon the right was Tús, son of Naudar,
Whose clarion-blasts thrilled to the mountains' hearts;
Gúdarz was on the left wing with Kishwád,
And clad the heights in iron; Kai Káús,
In chief command, was posted at the centre.
The troops drew up while elephantine Rustam,

Who never saw disaster, led them on.
Juyá, a noble of Mázandarán,
A fame-ensuer, a mace-brandisher,
And bragger likewise, by his monarch's leave
Confronted Kai Káús. The warrior's mail
Shone brilliantly, his falchion seared the ground;
He passed along the Íránian line with shouts
That plain and mountain echoed: "He must send
Dust up from water who would fight with me."
Not one came out against him, thou wouldst say:—
"Their veins pulsed not with blood." Then cried
Káús:— V. 368
"Why hath this dív's voice, valiant warriors!
Thus dazed your hearts and made your faces dark?"
They answered not a word, and thou hadst said:—
"The host is withered up before Juyá."
Then Rustam took the reins and shouldering
His shining spear said: "Will the Sháh permit me
To face this caitiff dív?"
Káús replied:—
"Be thine the task, for none will seek it else.
Go! May the Maker aid thee, be all dívs
And sorcerers thy quarry."
Rustam urged
His gallant Rakhsh and grasped his weighty spear,
Came on the scene like some mad elephant,
A Pard beneath him and in hand a Dragon,
Sent dust-clouds flying as he wheeled about,
And shouting shook the battle-field. "O knave!"
He cried, "thy name is cancelled 'mong the great.
This is no time of peace and ease for thee,
But pity; she shall weep who bare thee, nurtured,
And chastened thee."
"Be not too sure," he answered
"About Juyá and his head-reaping sword;
Thy mother's liver shall be split anon,

And she shall wash thy mail and casque with tears."
When Rustam heard he raised his battle-cry,
Proclaimed his name, and as he charged appeared
A moving mountain, while his foe dismayed
Wheeled round unwilling to contend with him,
But Rustam following, swift as dust, and aiming
The spearpoint straight against the girdlestead,
V. 369 So speared the mail that straps and buckles burst,
Unseated him, raised him aloft, and turned him
Like bird on spit,[1] then flung him down dust-choked,
With shivered mail. The warriors of the foe
Looked on astound, faint-hearted, pale of face,
And babble filled the field. Their king commanded
The whole host, saying: "Lift your heads and fight
Like leopards in this strife."
The warriors heard
His warlike words, and of that countless host
A vengeful throng advanced. The Sháh perceived it
And came on too in orderly array.
Both armies drew their swords and closed amid
The din of trump and drum, the sky was ebon,
Earth indigo, while swords and maces gleamed
Like lightning flashing from a murky cloud.
The air was crimson, black, and violet,
With spears and flags. The shouting of the dívs,
The clouds of dust, the roar of kettledrums,
And neigh of steeds, rent earth and shook the mountains;
None e'er saw such a fight. Arose the din
V. 370 Of arrow, mace, and sword, the plain became
A pool of heroes' blood, earth like a sea
Of pitch whose waves were maces, swords, and arrows.
Swift steeds sped on like ships upon the deep,
And thou hadst said of them: "They founder fast!"
While maces rained upon the casques and helms

[1] Cf. vol. i. p. 386 and *note*.

As autumn-blasts shower leaves from willow-trees.
Thus for a week those glory-seeking hosts
Encountered, on the eighth day Sháh Káús
Took from his head the royal casque and stood
Before the Judge and Guide of this world, weeping,
Then falling prostrate he exclaimed: "O Judge
Whose word is truth, who madest sea and land! V. 371
Give me to quell these dívs who fear not Thee,
And grace for me the throne of king of kings."
He donned his helm and joined his famous troops.
There rose a shout and trumpet-blare, the host
Moved like a mountain. He commanded Gív
And Tús to bring the tymbals to the front.
Gúdarz with Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Ruhhám, Gurgín, all eager for the fray,
Guráza like a wild boar, with a flag
Eight cubits high, Farhád, Kharrád, Barzín,
Rushed on the field to seek revenge anew.
First, matchless Rustam charging on the centre
Bathed earth with warriors' blood. Upon the right
Gúdarz fetched with Kishwád arms, drums, troops, baggage,
While from the right wing to the left Gív fared—
A wolf among the sheep. From dawn till sunset
Blood ran in streams, all looks were fierce and grim,
And thou hadst said: "The sky is raining maces."
The slain were heaped on every side, the grass
Was smirched with human brains. The drums and trumpets
Were like a thunder-clap, an ebon veil
Concealed the sun. Then elephantine Rustam
Charged with a mighty power against the quarter
Where stood the monarch of Mázandarán,
Who with his dívs and elephants of war V. 372
Awhile maintained his ground. Then Rustam gave
His pointed lance to one to hold, invoked

The name of God, raised high his mace, and raged;
His voice filled all the air, the dívs became
Dispirited, the elephants confounded;
Their trunks were scattered over all the plain,
And naught but corpses could be seen for miles.
Then calling for a spear he charged the king;
Both roared like thunder. When the king beheld
The spear of Rustam wrath and courage failed,
While Rustam, seething with revenge, sent up
V. 373 A mighty lion's roar, struck the king's girdle,
And pierced him through the mail. The sorcerer
Turned to a boulder by his magic arts
Before the Íránian host, while matchless Rustam
Stood in amaze, then shouldered his sharp lance.
The Sháh came up with drums and elephants,
With standards and with troops, and said to Rustam:—
"Why tarry here so long, exalted chief!"
He answered: "When victorious fortune showed
Amid the stress the monarch seeing me
Took up his massive mace, I gave to Rakhsh
The rein and speared the monarch through the mail.
Methought: 'Now will he tumble from his saddle.'
He turned to stone before me, as thou seest,
And recketh not of aught that I can do,
But I will carry him to camp, perchance
He will resume his shape."
The Sháh bade some
To bear and set the stone before his tent.
Then all the strongest of the host essayed
In vain to move the mass, howbeit Rustam
Raised it unaided to the troops' amaze,
Then shouldering the rock walked off therewith
With all the people shouting at his back.
They praised the Almighty, scattering gems and gold
O'er Rustam as he bare the stone and threw it
V. 374 Before the tent-enclosure of the Sháh.

He set a guard and said: "Quit these black arts
And sorceries to take thy proper shape,
Or else with this sharp steel and battle-ax
Will I break up the stone."
The sorcerer heard,
The stone dissolved like mist, the king was seen
In helmet and cuirass, and Rustam seizing
His hand turned laughing to the Sháh and said:—
"Permit me to present this piece of rock,
Which feared mine ax and quaketh in my grasp."
The Sháh on looking saw him not the man
For crown and throne; he had a loathly face,
A lanky shape and boar's head, neck, and tushes.
Káús recalled the past with pain and sighs,
Then bade a headsman hew the dív in pieces,
Whom matchless Rustam taking by the beard
Haled from the presence of Káús. They hewed
The dív to pieces as the great king bade.
They gathered all the booty from the camp,
And put together thrones and crowns and girdles,
Steeds, jewelry, and arms. The troops attended,
And each received according to his meed.
The impious dívs, whom all beheld with horror,
Were then beheaded by the Sháh's command
And flung beside the way. He said in prayer:—
"O righteous Judge! Thou hast not left a wish V. 375
Of mine unsatisfied, hast made me conquer
These sorcerers, and revived my hoary fortune."
He spent a week before the Lord in prayer,
Upon the eighth day oped the treasury-door,
And gave to all that lacked; another week
So passed while every man received his meed.
The third week still within Mázandarán
He called for amber cups and ruby cups,
And spent a night in revel. Thus rethroned
He said to Rustam: "Chief of paladins!

Thou hast displayed thy prowess everywhere,
And now I have received my throne from thee.
Bright be thy heart, thy Faith, and thine allegiance."
Then Rustam answered: "All men have their uses.
Whate'er I did was owing to Úlád,
My faithful guide, who hopeth now to rule
Mázandarán, for so I promised him
If he did well. Perchance the king of kings,
Who tendereth lieges, will exalt him thus?
First let the Sháh grant him investiture
By solemn covenant and under seal
As monarch of Mázandarán, and then
Let all the other chieftains do him homage.
He will approve himself thy faithful liege
And send to thee the tribute that is due."
The Sháh, on hearing what his servant said,
Assented, summoned from Mázandarán
The chiefs, and said in speaking of Úlád:—
"Do as he counselleth and bear no grudge."
He gave Úlád a special robe of honour,
And said: "Good worketh constantly unseen,"
V. 376 Bestowed on him the royal crown, and then
Set his own face to go to Párs again.

§ 16

How Káús returned to the Land of Írán and farewelled Rustam

Now when Káús was entering Írán,
And when the army's dust concealed the world,
The excitement reached the sun, and men and women
Met him with loud acclaim; they decked the land
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
The world grew young through him, and there arose
A New Moon from Írán. Glad and triumphant

He sat enthroned, unlocked his ancient hoards,
And summoned almoners. A shout went up
Before the gate of elephantine Rustam,
And all the captains of the host assembled
Rejoicing in the presence of the Sháh.
Then matchless Rustam, casque on head, drew near
And seated by the Sháh asked leave to go
To Zál. The worldlord gave him costly gifts,
Such as he merited—a throne with rams' heads
All jewelled in turquoise, a royal crown
Of gems, a robe of gold worn by the Sháh,
A splendid torque and armlet, and withal
A hundred moon-faced boys with golden girdles,
A hundred lovely damsels musky-haired,
A hundred noble steeds in golden harness,
A hundred black-haired mules with golden bridles
All laden with brocade of royal fashion
From Rúm, Pahlav, and Chín, a hundred purses
Filled with dínárs, bright stuffs, perfumes, and trinkets,
A ruby goblet full of purest musk,
Another of turquoise filled with rose-water,
And therewithal a patent writ on silk
With ink of musk, wine, ambergris, and aloes.
Upon that chief—the Light of earth—the Sháh V. 377
Bestowed anew the whole realm of Nímrúz,
So that thenceforth none else should have the throne,
And blessed him, saying: "May none see sun and moon
Without thee, be the chiefs' hearts warm to thee,
And be thy soul fulfilled with love and kindness."
Then Rustam leaped down, kissed the throne, made ready
For his departure, and bound on the baggage.
The din of kettledrums rose from the city,
And all partook his joy. They put up garlands
While bells and clarions sounded. Rustam went,

The Sháh remained, illumining the world
With laws and usages. When thus returned
He portioned out the earth among his chieftains,
Appointing Tús the captain of the host.
"Avert," he said, "disaster from Írán,"
While Ispahán bestowed he on Gúdarz,
Gave him the throne and lordship of that march,
And then disposed himself for mirth and wine,
Displayed his majesty and smote the neck
Of sorrow with the scimitar of justice.
None thought of death, the earth grew full of verdure—
A garden of Iram[1]—with streams and dew,
And rich by justice and security;
The hand of Áhriman was stayed from ill,
And day and night the fruits and foliage
Invoked a blessing on the crown and throne:—
"A hundred thousand blessings every hour
From the Creator be upon the Sháh,
Who by his justice civilizeth earth
And in his justice mindeth bounteousness."
'Twas noised abroad: "Káús the Sháh hath taken
The crown and throne out of Mázandarán."
V. 378 All wondered that he should achieve such greatness,
The loyal with their gifts and offerings
Drew up in rank before the monarch's door,
And all the world was decked like Paradise,
Fulfilled with wealth and justice.
Thou hast heard
About the warfare with Mázandarán,
Now hear the contest with Hámávarán.

[1] See vol. i. p. 100.

PART II

THE DOINGS OF KAI KÁÚS IN THE LAND OF BARBARISTÁN AND OTHER TALES

ARGUMENT

Káús makes a progress through his realm. He wars against the kings of Barbar, Misr, and Hámávarán; he marries Súdába, the daughter of the king of Hámávarán, and through treachery is taken captive by him. On this the Arabs and Afrásiyáb both invade Írán and fight for its possession. The Íránians in despair appeal to Rustam, who rescues Kai Káús, defeats Afrásiyáb, and reinstates the Sháh, who, warned by past experience, rules justly for a time, rises to the height of his power, and builds himself great palaces on Mount Alburz. Afterward he falls again into temptation, tries to mount to heaven, is rescued again by Rustam, again repents, and again is restored to power. The Part concludes with an account of one of Rustam's raids into Túrán.

NOTE

§§ 1–6. In the accounts of Kai Káús' two expeditions to Barbaristán we have a duplication of tradition.

The late Professor Darmesteter has thrown considerable light on that obscure subject, Firdausí's geography in this part of the poem.[1] There are several Barbars, and he points out that the one here intended is the Berbera nearly opposite Aden in the British Somali Coast Protectorate. It is the Pun-t of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, and was then and is still a great trading station. When the south-west monsoon changes into the north-east wind thousands of traffickers begin to arrive, and the place is kept busy from October to April. Further, he points out with regard to Hámávarán that it is a form of the word Himyar, which is another name for Yaman. We may therefore conclude that Firdausí's notion was

[1] DEI, ii. 221–224.

that Kai Káús marched from Nímrúz to the sea-coast of Makrán (Balúchistán), there built his fleet, sailed past the southern shores of Arabia, and reached some spot north of Berbera on the western shore of the Red Sea. He would then, as Firdausí says, have Misr (Egypt) on his left hand, Barbar on his right, and the sea between him and his objective Hámávarán (Yaman), which confronted him across it. The matter has become confused from the fact that Firdausí had just stated that the people of Misr and Shám (Syria) had rebelled against Kai Káús, and therefore Hámávarán has been assumed to mean Syria. We may add that the two historians Tabarí and Mas'údí both mention Kai Káús' expedition to Yaman, and so far, though their accounts differ considerably from Firdausí's, support Professor Darmesteter's elucidation of this episode.[1]

The matter has been further confused by Firdausí's use of the word "Zirih" in this part of his work. The word is usually employed in connexion with the lakes and swamps of Sístán, which formally were much more extensive.[2] The word, however, is merely an older (Pahlaví) form of the modern Persian "daryá," a sea, lake, or river. It has come, however, to be regarded as a proper name, and such an expression as "the sea of Zirih" is not only tautological but distinctly misleading. We translate "Zirih" sea. The expedition of Kai Káús looks like an attempt to capture an ancient trade-route.

The marriage of Kai Káús with the daughter of the king of Hámávarán is the cause of serious trouble later on, as will appear in Part IV.

The reference to Syria and a certain similarity of circumstance suggest that in the account of the treacherous capture of Kai Káús by the king of Hámávarán we have a distorted historical reminiscence of the overthrow of Antiochus Sidetes in the early spring of B.C. 128 or 129. Mithridates I., in the course of a reign of thirty-eight years (B.C. 174–136), had extended the narrow bounds of the Parthian kingdom both eastward and westward, to the Hindu Kush and to the Euphrates respectively. Westward the increase had taken place at the expense of the Seleucid kingdom of Syria. The successor of Mithridates—Phraates II.—made no attempt to enlarge his empire, but the king of Syria—Antiochus Sidetes—took the first opportunity to attempt to recover the provinces of which he had been deprived by Mithridates. He led a large and splendidly equipped host into Babylonia and thrice defeated Phraates II., who, though worsted, was not conquered, and still maintained himself with an army in the country. The three great cities of Babylon, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon, however, fell into the hands of

[1] ZT, i. 465. MM, ii. 119.

[2] See vol. i. p. 4.

the Syrians. Winter came on, and Antiochus Sidetes, resolved to maintain his advantage, distributed his forces throughout the cities and towns of Babylonia with the intention of renewing operations in the spring. The Syrian troops with their motley entourage of camp-followers, cooks, actors, etc., soon made themselves intolerable to the natives among and upon whom they were quartered. An understanding was entered into with Phraates II., who promised to be at hand with his army, and at a given signal the Syrian invaders, who were thoroughly enjoying themselves after their campaign and had been kept wholly ignorant of the impending danger, were attacked throughout Babylonia, and either massacred or taken captive. Antiochus Sidetes himself perished, his son Seleucus was taken prisoner and his niece as well, whom Phraates II. married.[1]

§§ 4 and 7. In the account of the invasion of Írán by the Arabs during the captivity of Kai Káús in Hámávarán, and their defeat by Afrásiyáb, we seem to have a reference to the invasions and conflicts that were actually going on during the period when the Zandavasta was being compiled or reconstructed, *i.e.* during the third century after the Christian era.[2] In the Zandavasta we read: "We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda. . . . It was that Glory that Thraétaona bore with him when Azi Daháka was killed; that Glory that Frangrasyan, the Turanian, bore when the wicked Zainigáu was killed."[3]

In the greater Bundahish we read: "There was a fiend called Zínigáv who had poison in his eye: he had come from the country of the Arabs to reign on Iran-Shahr: any man he gazed at with his evil eye, he killed. The Íránians called Frásyáv into their country, he killed that Zínigáv."[4] In the Bundahish Záínigáv is said to have been the grandfather of Zahhák,[5] the great protagonist of the Arab race in the Sháhnáma.[6] The Íránians, when they had to choose between the Túránians and the Arabs, preferred the former. Even the arch-enemy Afrásiyáb is allowed to have possessed for a while the divine Grace of kingship[7] when he opposed the common foe, the Arabs.[8]

§§ 8–10. We are told in the Dínkard that Kai Káús built himself seven dwellings on Mount Alburz, one of gold, two of silver, two of steel, and two of crystal, that he warred against the dívs of Mázandarán and fell into a trap which they laid to destroy him. To this end one of them undertook to tempt him by making him

[1] RP, 91 *seq.* [2] See vol. i. p. 61 *seq.*
[3] DZA, ii. 307, as amended in i. l., *note.* [4] *Id.*
[5] WPT, i. 131. [6] See vol. i. pp. 54, 141.
[7] *Id.* p. 82. [8] For the Arab invasions see *id.* p. 11.

discontented with his earthly sovereignty and inducing him to aspire to that of the sky of the archangels. He yielded to the tempter. Consequently the divine Glory left him, and he was only saved from destruction by the fravashi, or immortal principle, of the as yet unborn Kai Khusrau. Néryósang, the messenger of Urmuzd, was about to smite Káús when the fravashi cried out: "Thou shouldst not smite him, *O* Néryósang . . . for if thou shouldst smite this man . . . *there will* not be afterwards . . . a thorough destroyer *of* the high priest of Túrán; because owing to this man *will* be born *him whose* name is Síyávakhsh, *and* owing to Síyávakhsh I *shall* be born, who am the Khúsrói . . . so that I *may* accomplish the destruction of his champions and troops, when I would occasion a distant flight of the sovereign of Túrán." Accordingly Káús was released and became discreet.[1]

Underground dwellings, such as Kai Káús is said to have excavated for stabling purposes in connexion with his buildings, are very numerous in northern Írán.[2]

The reader will note that in § 9 we have Iblís where we should expect Áhriman, showing that this story came to Firdausí through the Arabic.[3]

§§ 11–14. In the story of the Fight of the Seven Warriors with which this part concludes we have an account of a border-foray of the Chevy Chase order. More than seven Íránian warriors, however, are mentioned.

§ 1

How Kai Káús warred with the King of Hámávarán

V. 379 We have received it both from archimage
And ancient bard of rustic lineage
That afterward Káús resolved to make
A progress through his kingdom. From Írán
He journeyed to Túrán and Chín, and after
Passed to Makrán, and thence down to the sea
In state; men's waists knew neither belt nor buckle.
The chiefs all paid their tribute and their dues,
The Ox took care not to provoke the Lion.
Thence to Barbar they went—a brilliant throng
With crown and diadem, intent on conquest.

[1] WPT, iv. 220–223. [2] GHP, i. 25, *note*. [3] See vol. i. p. 70.

The monarch of Barbar prepared for war,
And matters changed their hue. A host came forth
And stayed the revels of the great king's troops,
The elephants were hidden by the dust,
Men saw not hand or rein. The hosts encountered
Like mighty waves. Gúdarz beholding this
Took from the saddle-bow his mighty mace,
Urged on his steed and, with a thousand warriors V. 380
With javelins and with breastplate-piercing arrows,
Closed with and brake the centre of the foe.
Behind him charged the Sháh, thou wouldst have said:—
"There is not left a cavalier or spearman
Within Barbar." The elders of the country,
On seeing that the blast of war had passed,
Came to Káús, heart-broken, to seek peace,
And said: "We are thy slaves and bow our necks
To tribute; we will pay in gold and jewels
Instead of drachms, and earn thy treasurer's praise."
Káús received them graciously and taught them
New laws and ways. Anon the sound of bells
And cymbals rose with shouts and clarion-blare,
And he departed westward toward Mount Káf. V. 381
The people when they heard about the Sháh
Came forth to him and proffered fealty,
While all the great men went to welcome him,
And laid a heavy tribute on themselves.
When men performed his will with due submission
He and his host passed by and hurt them not.
He led the army to Zábulistán
As Rustam's guests and tarried there a month
With hawk and cheetah, song and minstrelsy.
Ere long a bramble grew among the roses.
To meet with trials is the lot of all,
And he that mounteth must expect a fall.
The Arabs rose when all seemed going well.

A wealthy and aspiring man of parts
Set up his standard both in Misr and Shám,
The people turned away from Kai Káús,
Renouncing fealty, who when he heard
Bade the drums sound and marched forth from Nímrúz
Light-heartedly, the soldiers wrote his name
Upon their shields, their swords shook in their scabbards.
Unnoticed by the foe he led his host
Down to the sea, built ships of war and transports
Beyond compute, embarked the host and sailed
A thousand leagues as thou wouldst count on land
V. 382 Till he arrived to win his own again
Where three states met—Misr on his left; Barbar
Upon his right; 'twixt him and his objective
Hámávarán, which fronted him, the sea.
Each had a mighty host. News came to them:—
"Káús hath crossed the water with his troops."
The three conferred, their troops met at Barbar—
An army such that desert, sea, and mountain
Were all aweary of the horses' hoofs.
There was no room left for the ravening lion,
Or path for onager across the plains;
The fish in water and the pard on rock,
The cloud and flying eagle in the air,
Sought passage, but what passage could there be
For wild things in a region so bested?
Now when Káús had disembarked his host
One saw not plain or mount. "The world is mailed,"
Thou wouldst have said, "each spearpoint is a star!"
What with the golden helms and golden shields,
And glittering axes borne upon the shoulder,
Thou wouldst have said: "The earth is running gold,
And Indian scimitars are raining souls."
The army's dust made heaven like sandarach,
The whole world turned as black as ebony,

The mountains shivered at the trumpets' blast,
And earth was bent beneath the horses' hoofs,
The din of tymbals would have made thee say:—
"Earth is one camp."
When from the Íránian host
The trump and drum were heard Bahrám, Gurgín,
And Tús came forth and, where Gúdarz was stationed,
Shídúsh, Farhád, and Gív let fall their reins, V. 383
And steeped the heads of all their spears in bane.
The horsemen bent upon the saddlebow,
And shout and crash of battle-ax were heard;
Thou wouldst have said: "They quarry stone and iron,
Or dash down heaven to earth." When at the centre
Káús advanced, and host encountered host,
The eyes of men grew dim, vermilion rained
On lapislazuli, and thou hadst said:—
"The air is hailing and is planting tulips
Among the rocks." The javelins' eyes flashed fire,
And earth became as 'twere a sea of blood.
The Íránians so dismayed the three allies
That end and middle were all one to them.
The monarch of Hámávarán was first V. 384
To drop the scimitar and massive mace,
Saw that the day was lost and sorrowing sought
Peace with the Sháh, agreeing to send tribute,
Steeds, implements of war, and thrones and crowns,
Provided that Káús, when all was paid,
Should go and keep his troops from harrying.
Káús replied: "I grant you all protection.
Seek not my crown and throne."
He then marched back
Well pleased to camp, and from Hámávarán
An envoy brought him treasures, stores of arms,
With emeralds and other gems and said:—
"O just and mighty lord! we chiefs and commons
Are dust upon thy feet and slaves of thine.

Be joyful and triumphant all thy years,
And be the heads and fortunes of thy foes
O'erturned."
He kissed the ground and bore to Tús
The store of gold and gems, who therewithal
Gave to each man a largess great or small.

§ 2

How Káús asked to Wife Súdába, the Daughter of the King of Hámávarán

Anon one said to Kai Káús: "This monarch
Hath in his bower a daughter goodlier
In stature than a cypress, crowned with musk,
With locks like lassos, dagger-shaped of tongue,
v. 385 With lips like sugar, decked like Paradise
With charms, or like bright Sol in jocund spring.
None else should be the consort of the Sháh:
How good it were for him to mate this Moon!"
His heart was stirred, he answered: "It is well.
I will demand her from her sire; her beauty
Will well become my ladies' bower."
He chose
A man of noble birth, shrewd, wise, and grave,
Bade him set forward to Hámávarán,
And said: "Dispose the king to favour me,
And charm his intellect with honied words.
Say thus to him: 'The most redoubted chiefs
Throughout the world seek mine affinity
Because the sun is lighted from my crown,
Earth is the footing of mine ivory throne,
And one that sheltereth not beneath my shade
Hath little standing-room. I seek to be
Affined to thee and wash the face of peace.
Now I have heard that thou hast in thy bower

A daughter who is worthy of my state,
Immaculate in form and countenance,
Praised everywhere by all. Thou wilt obtain
The son of Kai Kubád as son-in-law,
For know that Sol thus favoureth thy cause.'"
This shrewd man with the ready tongue approached
The ruler of Hámávarán, adorned
His tongue with eloquence, his heart with zeal,
And furnished forth his lips with courtesies.
He gave that monarch greeting from Káús,
Then did the embassage, which pained the king,
Who thought: "Though he be king of kings and world-lord
Victorious and obeyed, I have no daughter
But this, and she is dearer than sweet life;
Yet if I slight and spurn this messenger
I cannot fight. 'Tis best to shut mine eyes V. 386
To this affliction and repress my wrath."
He answered that fair-spoken envoy thus:—
"He asketh of me much—two things unequalled
In preciousness; my wealth is my support,
My child my treasure; being robbed of her
My very heart is gone, yet I resign them
And yield to his request."
He called Súdába,
And full of sorrow spake thus of Káús:—
"A courteous envoy hath arrived and brought
A letter from that mighty lord, who lacketh
Naught that is great and good, to this effect:—
He would deprive me, though I wish it not,
Of heart-repose and all my peace of mind.
What dost thou say now? What is thine own wish?
What is thy shrewd decision in this case?"
Súdába answered: "If this must be so
There is no need to sup on grief to-day.
Why grieve at union with the king of earth,

Who can deprive the mighty of their lands?
This is not grief but joy."
The king perceived
That she was not unwilling, called the envoy,
And gave him the chief place. They made a compact,
Each with the rites and sanctions then obtaining.
V. 387 The broken-hearted monarch and his chiefs
Were busied for a week, and then brought forth
Two scores of litters and three hundred slaves,
A thousand each of camels, steeds, and mules,
Whose loads were of dínárs and of brocade,
And 'neath the haudahs hung embroidered trappings.
An escort was drawn up in long defile;
The New Moon graced one litter; following her
There came her marriage-portion, then the escort
Arrayed like Paradise; thou wouldst have said:—
"The heaven hath planted tulips in the earth!"
Now when that fair-faced troop and Heart's Delight
Approached the presence of Sháh Kai Káús
A New Moon issued from the haudah like
A new-throned monarch robed. There musk and rose
Contrasted, and the earrings hung on civet;
Eyes languished, cheeks were ruby-red, and eyebrows
Sprang from a column like a silvern reed.
Káús in rapt amaze invoked God's name,
He called the hoary, shrewd, and wise archmages,
And having judged her fit to be his consort
He sanctioned his desires with legal rites.
"I knew thee at first sight," he told his spouse,
"Fit to adorn mine Idols' golden house."

§ 3

How the King of Hámávarán made Káús Prisoner

Meanwhile the father grieved and sought a cure;
So eight days afterward he sent at dawn

A messenger to Kai Káús to say:—
"If now the Sháh will be mine honoured guest
The people of Hámávarán will be
Much honoured too when they behold his face."
In this wise sought he to entrap Káús, V. 388
And being bad of heart and shrewd of wit,
Thought to retain his kingdom and his child,
And to escape all tribute. Now Súdába
Knew that her sire meant outrage at a feast,
And said to Kai Káús: "This is not well.
Thou must not be his guest, lest at the banquet
He make a brawl and get thee in his clutches.
All this ado is made on mine account,
And must result in thy discomfiture."
He heeded not her words because he held
Her people feeble folk, and as a guest
Went with his warriors and mighty men.
The ruler of Hámávarán possessed
A pleasure-city, Sháha hight, and had
A residence therein. He decked the city
Throughout, and when the exalted Sháh arrived
The citizens all did him reverence,
Showered gems and saffron, mingled ambergris
With musk, and wove the sounds of harp and song
Like warp and woof. The monarch and his nobles
Descrying Sháh Káús approached on foot.
The palace from the gateway to the hall
Rained jewels, pearls, and gold; men poured them forth
From golden trays and sifted ambergris
And musk o'erhead. The king set up a throne
Of gold within the palace and Káús
Sat there in joy. He revelled for a week;
The place delighted and enchanted him.
The monarch of Hámávarán stood girded—
A subject in his presence day and night—
With all his troops to serve the Íránians V. 389

Till each felt safe, and all suspicion ceased;
But when the week was o'er their hosts were ready
And rose; the soldiers of Barbaristán
Had been apprised and were upon the march:
Such was the plot. Their advent joyed the king.
At night came sound of trumpet and assault
When no Íránian was prepared for fight.
Forthwith the forces of Hámávarán
Seized on Káús and Gív, Gúdarz and Tús,
Gurgín and Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And all the other famous warriors;
These they took captive and bound fast in bonds,
And throne and Grace were shent! What saith the man
Of insight and O sage! what thinkest thou?
"Trust in another man is not secure
Without the tie of blood to make it sure,
And even one so bound to thee may turn
His face away and thine affection spurn.
If then another's love thou fain wouldst try
Prove it in weal and in adversity,
For if in rank thou art more high than he
Then envy will abate his love for thee.
The course of this pernicious world is so,
It lightly changeth with all winds that blow."
Káús was ta'en; his over-confidence
Achieved the purpose of Hámávarán.
There was a mountain with a cloud-capt head,
Which God had lifted from the ocean-depths,
And on the mountain-top a fortress rose;
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky is in its lap."
'Twas thither that the monarch sent Káús,
Gív, and Gúdarz, and Tús; the other chiefs
He flung inside that stronghold with the Sháh
v. 390 Bound. Over it a thousand warriors,
All swordsmen of renown, kept watch. He gave
The camp-enclosure of Káús to spoil,

Bestowing on his own chiefs crowns and purses.
Two files of ladies with a covered litter
Between them were deputed to escort
Súdába home and trampled on the tents.
Now when Súdába saw the ladies come
She rent her royal raiment and plucked out
Her musky tresses. With her filbert-nails
She stained her rosy cheeks the hue of blood,
Exclaiming thus: "Men that are men indeed
Hold in contempt such tricks and outrages.
Ye should have bound him on the day of battle
What time his robe was mail, his throne a steed,
And chieftains such as Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús
Rent with their drums your hearts. Ye make the throne
Of gold an ambuscade and break your faith."
She called the servants "dogs," her jasmine-skin
Was smirched with blood, she did not spare her words.
She said: "I will not part with Kai Káús
Although he shall be hidden in the dust,
And, since he needs must drag his chain, behead me
All guiltless as I am."
They told her sire,
Who was enraged and, eager for revenge,
Dispatched her to his fortress, broken-hearted
With blood-stained cheeks to join her husband there.
Thenceforth she sat in sorrow with the king
Engaged in tending him and comforting.

§ 4

How Afrásiyáb invaded the Land of Írán

The ambitious Sháh being bound, his army made
Toward Írán, and having passed the sea
In ships and transports crossed the desert homeward.

V. 391 When they arrived 'twas bruited through the realm:—
"The Cypress-tree is missing from the garden,
The throne of king of kings is overturned."
Now when men saw the golden throne left void
They all desired the crown; upon each side
Great hosts of Turkmans and of desert-spearmen
Approached, cries rose from both sides of Írán,
And peace was changed to strife. Áfrásiyáb
Joined battle fiercely with the Árábian host;
They fought three months, and many heads were lost
To win a crown, the Arabs were o'erthrown,
And all their gain was loss. The Turkman troops
O'er-ran the country and enslaved the folk.
It is the custom of this Wayside Inn
That greed should bring both travail and chagrin;
At last both good and evil pass away;
Death is the hunter and this world his prey.

V. 392 The people said: "Our fortunes are o'erturned,
We are confronted with a grievous case.
Woe for Írán, for it is desolate,
The lair of pards and lions! 'Twas erewhile
All warrior-horsemen and the seat of kings,
But now a scene of hardship and of bale,
The dwelling-place of dragons sharp of claw!
Seek we a remedy and banish care.
One fed on leopards' milk shall succour us;
Dispatch we then a sage in state to Rustam."
An archmage went to him and told the tidings,
And Rustam, deeply moved, wept tears of gall.
He answered: "I and mine are girt for vengeance.
First I will see about Káús, then sweep
The Turkman from Írán."
He summoned troops,

V. 393 Who flocked to him out of Zábul, Kábul,
And Hindústán. Throughout his wide domain

Arose the sound of trump and Indian bell.
The heart of Rustam raged like fire; he led
The army forth and like a storm-wind sped.

§ 5

How Rustam sent a Message to the King of Hámávarán

Then Rustam sent a wary messenger
To make his way to Kai Káús and say:—
"I am approaching with a mighty host
To fight the ruler of Hámávarán.
Be glad of heart and feed not on thy grief:
Behold! I am already in the land."
Withal a man of name among the chiefs
Went to the ruler of Hámávarán,
And Rustam wrote to him in warlike terms
A letter all mace, scimitar, and fray:—
"Thou hast entrapped our Sháh and broken faith.
It is not manly to use guile in war,
Nor art thou dour like the bold crocodile
Which never ambuscadeth in the fight
Although its heart be brimming with revenge. V. 394
Thou shalt escape the Dragon's evil clutch
If Sháh Káús be set at large; if not,
Prepare thyself to feel my weight in battle.
Thou surely must have heard the chieftains tell
Of how I fought against Mázandarán,
Fought with Púlád son of Ghundí and Bíd,
And smote the White Dív."
As he read the letter
The king turned dizzy, and the world grew dark
Before his eyes. He answered: "Kai Káús
Shall never set foot on the plain, and when
Thou comest to Barbaristán, and all
Thy cavaliers have fled, a chain and pit
Are ready for thee too. If these delights

Allure thee I, according to our custom,
V 395 Will meet thee with my troops."
When Rustam heard
The answer, and the chieftains had assembled,
The trumpets sounded and he mounted Rakhsh.
He went by sea because the way by land
Was tedious, crossing to Hámávarán
With all his mighty host in ships and transports.
The troops were ready both to spoil and slay,
And banished all compunction from their hearts.
Now when the monarch of Hámávarán
Had news of vengeful Rustam and his host
V. 396 He raged, the war-cry rose, and all the world
Seethed up in blood and pillage. Rustam donned
His armour, mounted on the snorting Rakhsh,
And shouldering his mace charged furiously.
Whenas the foemen saw his chest and arms,
And how he handled mace and battle-ax,
Thou wouldst have said: "They have no hearts at all."
They scattered in their fear of him, and thus
That great host fled back to Hámávarán.
The king in conclave summoned two young men
In order to dispatch them to Barbar
And Misr, like rushing wind, each with a letter
Penned in distress of heart with blood for ink,
V. 397 And thus it ran: "Our realms confine, we share
In good and evil, and in fight and feast.
If ye will join with me I fear not Rustam
In fight; if not, the evil will extend,
And evil's hand extendeth on all sides."
Whenas the letter reached the kings, announcing
That Rustam led his host across the desert,
They feared, bestirred themselves, arrayed their powers
And marched toward Hámávarán. The land
Became all hill, troops stretched from range to range,

And dust obscured the moon. Then Rustam sent
A warrior in haste to Sháh Káús
By stealth to say: "The monarchs of three realms
Approach to fight—brave men who shall not know
Their heads from feet when I encounter them;
But thou must not be injured by our strife
Since evil men are prone to outrages,
And e'en Barbar's throne would avail me not
If ill befell the person of the Sháh."
Káús made answer: "Have no care for this;
The earth was not spread out for me alone,
And bane will mix with sweets and love with hate
While heaven turneth. God too is my friend,
My refuge, and my stronghold is His love.
Give Rakhsh the rein, and level to his ears
Thy lance's point; let not a foe remain
In arms or hiding."
Matchless Rustam heard, V. 398
Armed, and went forth to battle, urged fleet Rakhsh
Along, and challenged all the world to fight,
Then stood alone and glared upon the foe,
But no one dared though Rustam waited long,
Until bright Sol was setting in the sea,
And dark-hued night was coming on apace.
Then that great elephantine chief returned,
And rested in his tent till night was passed;
The next day, when the sun grew bright again,
He came forth and arrayed his mighty men.

§ 6

How Rustam fought with Three Kings and delivered Káús

Next day they set the battle in array
And raised their standards. When the peerless Rustam
Had led his forces to the field, and viewed

The armies of three monarchs and three realms,
He thus harangued his noble warriors:—
"Keep your eyelashes well apart to-day,
And look to mane and forelock, steed and rein,
With both eyes on your spearpoints. Be the foe
A hundred or a hundred thousand horse
Their sum importeth not for, since the All-holy
Is our ally, I will bring down their heads
To dust."
V. 399 The monarchs on their side were seated
On elephants; their forces stretched two miles.
Barbaristán sent eight score elephants
All foaming like the Nile, Hámávarán
Contributed a hundred more—huge beasts—
And had a line of battle two miles long,
And thirdly was arrayed the power of Misr.
The atmosphere was darkened, earth was hidden,
And thou hadst said: "The world is all of iron,"
Or: "Mount Alburz hath donned a coat of mail."
Behind the warriors' backs amid the dust
Waved flags of yellow, red, and violet;
The mountains echoed with the heroes' shouts,
Aud earth was weary of the tramp of steeds.
Then were the claws and hearts of lions rent,
And lusty eagles flung their plumes away,
The clouds of heaven melted in mid air,
For how could anything oppose such troops?
The Íránians ranked the host to right and left,
The heroes longed for battle and revenge.
Guráza held the right where was the baggage,
Upon the left was glorious Zawára—
A Dragon and a Lion in the fray—
While Rustam at the centre, with coiled lasso
V. 400 Hung to his saddlebow, bade sound the advance.
Then sword and javelin gleamed; thou wouldst have
said:—

"Heaven hath sown earth with tulips," and where Rustam
Urged Rakhsh: "He spreadeth fire," and: "All the waste
Is as a Zam [1] of blood, not like a field
Of elephantine Rustam's." Helméd heads
Were smitten off, and plain and hollow strewn
With mail. The peerless hero urged on Rakhsh
And, deigning not to slaughter common folk,
Charged at the king of Shám and lassoed him
(Thou wouldst have said the lasso crushed his waist),
Then snatched him from the saddle, like a ball
Struck by a polo-stick, and flung him down.
Bahrám made fast his hands. They captured sixty
Of name and deluged plain and hill with blood.
The monarch of Barbar and forty chiefs
Were taken prisoners by Guráza's hand,
And when the monarch of Hámávarán V. 401
Beheld his soldiers slain on every side,
Beheld a troop of wounded warriors,
Another troop fast bound in heavy chains,
And valiant Rustam with his trenchant sword
Creating Doomsday on the battlefield,
He felt: "This day is one of bale," and sent
To Rustam to ask quarter, promising
To give up Kai Káús and all the leaders,
And to restore the treasures, crowns, and jewels,
The tent-enclosures, thrones, and golden girdles,
And slaves. They made a peace and then disbanded
Three hosts. The monarch of Hámávarán
Went home and sat in council, sent, and fetched
Káús, and righted him. When Rustam thus
Released the Sháh with Gív, Tús, and Gúdarz,
He stored three kingdoms' arms, three monarchs' riches,
The tents, the crowns, and everything of value, V. 402

[1] The name of a river.

Among the treasures of Sháh Kai Káús,
Who then refulgent in his sun-like Grace
Prepared a gilded litter of brocade
Of Rúm, a crown of gems, a turquoise seat,
A sable housing decked with jewelry,
And placed them on a steed of easy pace,
Whose bridle was adorned with gold. He made
The litter out of fresh-cut aloe-wood
Inlaid with many divers kinds of gems,
And bade Súdába take her seat therein
Secluded like the sun beneath the earth,
Then led the army campward from the city
To reassert his claims upon Írán.
A hundred thousand horsemen from Barbar,
Hámávarán, and Misr assembled round him,
While his own host was fifteen thousand score
Of cavaliers on bardéd steeds and more.

§ 7

How Káús sent a Message to Afrásiyáb

V. 403 Now when the Arab spearmen of the desert
Heard from Hámávarán of Rustam's doings
With Misr and with Barbar and with their kings,
They chose a wise and valiant man, well skilled
In horsemanship and javelin-play, and wrote
A royal letter couched in fitting terms.
"We are," they said, "the servants of the Sháh
And only walk the world at his command;
So when a host came from the Kargasárs
To seek his throne our hearts were greatly grieved
At such presumption. When Afrásiyáb
Desired thy throne (may none such dream thereof)
We chiefs and swordsmen went forth to the field
V. 404 With our long spears and turned his joy and ease

To bitterness. On both sides many fell,
The age grew conversant with good and evil,
And now we hear of thee and that the Grace
Of king of kings reviveth. When thou comest
Back from Barbar we all will shoulder spears,
Fill earth from hill to hill with foemen's blood,
And make the world run like Jíhún."
The envoy
Spurred forth toward Barbaristán, the Sháh
Received the letter couched in such fair terms,
Then wrote a letter to Afrásiyáb:—
"Quit thou Írán and limit thine ambition.
I wonder much at what I hear of thee.
Thou hast no wants, thou joyest in Túrán;
Then be not covetous or fondly grasping
At ill, which soon will bring thee lengthy toils.
A smaller matter is enough for thee—
To save thy skin. Dost know not that Írán
Is my seat, earth all mine? The boldest leopard
Will never dare to face the lion's claws."
He gave a paladin the letter sealed, V. 405
Who reached the monarch of Túrán and Chín
In haste, first kissed the ground and did obeisance,
And after compliments gave him the letter
Which, when Afrásiyáb had read it, filled
His head with vengeance and his heart with rage.
He answered: "Only miscreants talk thus.
In thy case, if Írán had satisfied thee
Thou hadst not coveted Hámávarán,
And now that I have won Írán, and raised
My fluttering flag, that broad champaign is mine
On two accounts; thou needs must hear the truth:
First—I inherit all the land from Túr, V. 406
My grandsire and the son of Farídún;
And secondly—I cleared it of the Arabs
With my sword-arm. I with my scimitar

Behead the mountains and bring eagles down
From their dark cloud-tops."
He equipped his troops,
And marched in person to oppose Káús,
Who, when he heard, arrayed a boundless host
And from Barbar marched to Arabia
To meet Afrásiyáb; the world was filled
With trump and tymbal-din, the sky was ebony,
V. 407 The earth was iron. What with crash of ax
And twang of bow a blood-wave swept the field,
While Rustam thundering from the centre broke
The foemen with one charge. On that field slept
The fortunes of Túrán. Afrásiyáb
Boiled, like fermenting must, without a fire,
And cried: "O gallant hearts of mine, my Lions,
And chosen chiefs! 'twas for a time like this
That ye were reared upon my breast, and now
Ye play at battle with mine Arab foes!
Be strong, renew the fight, and make the world
Too narrow for Káús, spear and cut down
His warriors, and behead his haughty chiefs.
As for this lion-hearted man of Sigz,[1]
Who maketh heaven redden with his sword,
Be bold and take him captive with your lassos.
Whoever on the battlefield shall bring him
Down from the pard-skin to the dust shall have
A realm, a parasol, my daughter's hand,
And be entitled 'captain of the host;'
Him will I make the lord of all Írán,
And will exalt him to revolving heaven."
Thereat the Turkmans rallied to the fight.
With massive maces in their hands the brave,
V. 408 The chieftains of Írán, so slaughtered them
That rivers, plains, and hills were strewn with slain—

[1] According to C, glossary (*s.v.*), a mountain in Zábulistán where Rustam was born, but more probably = Sajistán = Sístán.

The more part of their host—and earth was puddled
With blood to clay. The Turkmans' fortune slept.
Afrásiyáb fled Rustam with the troops
From Ghúr; he sought for gain but gained a loss,
And seeing fortune's bent left them and stricken
Marched toward Túrán, his warriors mostly slain:
He searched the world for honey and found bane.

§ 8

How Káús ordered the World

Káús arrived at Párs, the world began
An age of happiness. He acted justly,
Adorned the throne, and gave free scope to feasting;
He sent forth wise and noble paladins
With troops to all parts—Marv and Níshápúr,
Harát and Balkh. Then justice ruled the world;
The wolf eyed not the lamb. Such were his treasures,
His state, and Grace, that fairies, men, and dívs
Served him, all were his lieges, other kings
Were soldiers in his host. He gave the office
Of paladin of paladins to Rustam—
The author of his weal—and wearied out
The dívs to build himself on Mount Alburz
Two mansions, each ten lassos long, which they
Constructed at his bidding of hard stone.
He excavated stables in the rocks,
The columns were of stone with clamps of steel,
And there he kept the war-steeds and the camels V. 409
To ride or carry litters. He erected
A pleasure-house of crystal, studding it
With emeralds; a cupola of onyx
Brought from Yamán, and there installed archmages
That learning might not fail; two armouries
Of virgin silver and a golden palace

Twice sixty cubits high for his own seat
With turquoise traceries; he spared not jewels.
It was a dwelling after his own heart,
Where daily provand waxed continually.
There was no summertide or wintertide,
The air was ambergris, the rain was wine,
The days of springtide lasted all the year,
And roses there were like a maiden's blush,
The heart was far from sorrow, pain, and travail,
The dívs were harmless being spent with toil.
So good and just was he that fortune slept,
While drudging dívs beneath his rigour wept.

§ 9

How Káús, beguiled by Iblís, ascended the Sky

One dawn Iblís, unknown to Kai Káús,
Addressed the assembled dívs: "Our daily task
Is one of cruel labour for the Sháh.
V. 410 We need a dív shrewd and presentable
To tempt him, soil his Grace, wean him from God,
And thus abate his tyranny."
They heard
And mused. None answered, for they feared Káús.
At length a wicked dív arose and said:—
"Be mine this subtile task. I will pervert
His mind from God as none but I can do."
Appearing as a youth of good address
And mien, he waited till the famous Sháh
Went hunting from Pahlav. The dív approached
With roses to present, then kissed the ground,
And said: "Thy glory and thy Grace are such
That heaven is thy fit home and earth thy slave;
Thou art the shepherd, nobles are the sheep.
One thing is lacking still—that thou shouldst leave

Thine everlasting mark upon the world.
How is it that the sun concealeth from thee
The secret of its rising and its setting?
What is the moon? What are the night and day,
And who is master of the turning sky?
Thou hast the earth and all thou didst desire;
Now take the heaven also in thy toils."
The Sháh's heart strayed, he tarried not to think,
Convinced that turning heaven favoured him.
He knew not that the sky is ladderless,
Nor that, though stars be many, God but One,
What ever He commandeth must be done V. 411
How ever great the struggle and the stress.
The Maker hath no need of sky and earth;
'T'was for thy sake that both of them had birth.
The Sháh mused how to roam the air though wingless,
And often asked the wise: "How far is it
From earth to moon?"
The astrologers replied.
He chose a futile and perverse device:
He bade men scale the aeries while the eagles
Were sleeping, take a number of the young,
And keep a bird or two in every home.
He had those eaglets fed a year and more
With fowl, kabáb, and at some whiles with lamb.
When they were strong as lions and could each
Bear off a mountain-sheep he made a throne
Of aloe from Kumár[1] with seats of gold.
He bound a lengthy spear at every corner,
Suspended a lamb's leg from every spear-head,
Brought four strong eagles, tied them to the throne,
And took his seat, a cup of wine before him.
The swift-winged eagles, ravenous for food,
Strove lustily to reach the flesh, and raising

[1] Cape Comorin.

The throne above earth's surface bore it cloudward.
Káús, as I have heard, essayed the sky
To outsoar angels, but another tale
Is that he rose in this way to assail
The heaven itself with his artillery.
The legend hath its other versions too;
None but the All-wise wotteth which is true.
Long flew the eagles, but they stopped at last,
V. 412 Like other slaves of greed. They sulked exhausted,
They drooped their sweating wings and brought the Sháh,
His spears, and throne down from the clouds to earth,
Alighting in a forest near Ámul.[1]
The world preserved him by a miracle,
But hid its secret purposes therein.
In answer to his prayers a duck[2] appeared,
For something must be had to eat and drink,
And if Sháh Kai Káús had perished there
Worldlord Khusrau had not been born from him.[3]
Instead of sitting on his throne in might
His business then was penitence and travail.
He tarried in the wood in shame and grief
Imploring from Almighty God relief.

§ 10

How Rustam brought back Káús

While thus the Sháh sought pardon his own host
Was searching for him everywhere. When Rustam
With Gív and Tús gat news of him they marched
With many troops and drums. Said old Gúdarz
To Rustam: "Since my mother suckled me

[1] Reading with P.

[2] Siyáwush; also the name of the yet unborn son of Kai Káús and father of Kai Khusrau.

[3] Couplet inserted from C. See introductory note to this Part.

I have been conversant with crown and throne,
With kings and great men of unsleeping fortune,
But have not seen in all the world a man
'Midst high and low so self-willed as Káús.
He hath no wisdom, common sense, or Faith,
He is wrong-headed and wrong-hearted too.
Thou wouldest say: 'He hath no brains, his thoughts
Are all awry.' None of the great of yore
Hath e'er essayed the heavens. Like witless madmen V. 413
He is borne off his feet by every wind."
Whenas the paladins arrived they rated
The Sháh. "The madhouse is thy proper place,"
Gúdarz said, "not the city. Thou surrenderest
Thy seat to foes and tellest none thy whims.
Thrice hast thou been in trouble, yet thy head
Is none the wiser! To Mázandarán
Thou led'st a host, and look what mischief followed!
Again, thou madest merry with a foe,
Yet thou—his idol—hadst to worship him!
And when none in the world save holy God
Remained to read the title of thy sword,
Since earth was conquered, thou must needs try heaven,
Although to soar one hand-breadth is revolt.
What bale hast thou encountered yet escaped!
Hereafter folk will tell of thee: 'A Sháh
Went to the sky to see the sun and moon,
And count the stars.' Now do as princes do
When prudent, pious, and beneficent—
Serve God and Him alone in weal and woe."
Káús, abashed before those famous heroes,
Replied: "No harm can come of righteous judgment;
Thy words are righteous and thou hast convinced me."
He wept gall, called on God, and took his seat
Distressed and penitent within the litter.
He reached his lofty throne, but, being troubled V. 414
Still at his great offence, he quitted it

And entered not his palace out of shame,
But paced the dust in prayer before his God
For forty days. Thou wouldst have said: "His skin
Hath burst." He prayed with tears of blood and wailed
For Grace. Abashed to meet the mighty men
He ceased from banquetings and audiences,
Repented and did penance, giving largess,
And laid his cheek upon the darksome dust
In prayer to God who in a while forgave him.
His scattered troops assembled at his gate;
God's pardon gave him brightness; he was ware
That penance had borne fruit. He took his seat
Crowned on the throne of gold, gave to his troops
A donative, reformed the world, and grew
A Light to great and small; thou wouldst have said:—
"The world, now right is done, is all brocade,
The king of kings illumineth the throne."
From every province those illustrious chiefs,
That had assumed the crown, renewed allegiance
And journeyed to his court, old times returned,
The monarch bathed his crown in love and faith,
The princes all attended as his slaves
Before him while he sat upon his throne
Of jewel-work with crown and ox-head mace.
V. 415 I tell the tale as I have heard it told,
And none hath such another to unfold.
Such were the actions of the worldlord king
And Rustam, chief of paladins! Whene'er
A king is just then all is well and fair;
He needeth not to cry for succouring.
Káús saw what was right, did what was right,
A breath of wind was this world in his sight.

THE STORY OF THE FIGHT OF THE SEVEN WARRIORS

§ 11

How Rustam went with the Seven Warriors to the Hunting-ground of Afrásiyáb

To strive with death is but a bootless strife,
Such is the moral taught by Rustam's life.
A minstrel whom a lion once surprised—
A man of valiant heart—thus moralised:—
"If thou wouldst have the glory of the brave,
And wouldst imbrue in blood an Indian glave,
Seek not to spare thyself, for destiny
Will not be balked when 'tis the time to die.
If, being wise, thou keepest death in sight
The brave will count thee not a man of might.
Both Faith and wisdom sanction not this course,
But their good teaching is enslaved by force."
A goodly gest of Rustam's next I tell. V. 416
Once at Nawand—that place of palaces—
The mighty hero gave a splendid feast
Where tall Barzín[1] now beaconeth the way.
The great men of Írán— a famous band—
Tús and Gudárz son of Kishwád, Bahrám
And Gív—both noble men—Gurgín and Zanga,
Kharrád and Gustaham, that haughty swordsman
Barzín and, crown of all the band, Guráza,
Assembled at the place of banqueting,
Each with his meiny—an illustrious throng.
They spent a while at polo, wine, and hunting,
And, when they all were merry, Gív bemused
Said thus to Rustam: "O illustrious chief!

[1] The name of a fire-temple.

Come let us, if thou hast a mind to hunt,
Hide from the great Afrásiyáb's preserves
The sun's resplendent visage with the dust
Of horsemen, cheetahs, hawks, and our long spears.
There let us chase the rapid onager,
O'ercome the lion with the sword, and take
Boars with the spear and pheasants with the hawk
Throughout the livelong day. Come let us go
V. 417 A-hunting in yon desert of Túrán
To make ourselves a memory in the world."
Then Rustam answered: "Be it as thou wilt,
And prosper thou. Seek we Túrán at dawn
To hunt and harry in the deserts there."
They all agreed and, when they rose next day,
Made ready eagerly, and setting forth
With cheetahs, hawks, and baggage bravely sped
Toward the Shahd across the hunting-ground
Of great Afrásiyáb, on one side mountains,
A river on another side, Sarakhs
Upon the third, a wilderness in front.
Both deer and sheep flocked on the plain, which soon
Was occupied by tents and huts. The deer
Were frighted by the company, the lions
No longer ravened there, birds as they flew
Knew something of the sport, for bird and beast
Lay everywhere in heaps, some killed, some wounded.
V. 418 The hunters were light-hearted, full of glee,
With laughter constantly upon their lips,
And having spent a sennight wine in hand
Were jovially bemused. The peerless Rustam
Came as the eighth day dawned with needful warnings:—
"Afrásiyáb no doubt hath heard of us
By this. We must not let that Áhriman
Take counsel with his famous officers,

Devise a ruse, come forth to fight, and rob V. 419
Our cheetahs of their hunting-grounds. We need
An outpost on the road to bring us news,
However scanty, of our enemies;
We must not let them cut us off."
The chief
Of all the offspring of Gívgán—Guráza—
Girt him for that emprise. With such a watchman
The ruses of the foe were nothing worth.
The others hunted in security.
At length Afrásiyáb gat news of them
At sleeping-time and called his veteran chiefs,
Discoursed to them at large of Rustam, told them
About the seven warriors—lion-like
And gallant cavaliers—and thus he said:—
"We must not dally, but devise a ruse,
And fall upon them unawares. If we
Can seize these seven warriors we shall straiten
The world for Kai Káús. We must go forth
As if to hunt and take them by surprise."
He chose him thirty thousand famous swordsmen,
And spake thus: "Go not by the beaten track, V. 420
And slumber not but hasten night and day."
They hastened forth along the desert-route,
And raised their necks for strife. Afrásiyáb
Dispatched meanwhile to cut those proud chiefs off
A countless host. As they drew near the chace,
Advancing quickly eager for revenge,
The outpost saw them like a darksome cloud,
While dust arose like lapislazuli
Wherein a flag appeared. Like rushing wind
He turned back shouting lustily and found
The matchless Rustam and his mates at wine,
Then cried: "O Rustam, lion-man! away
With these delights, for such a countless host
Appeareth that the plain and heights are one;

The standard of the fell Afrásiyáb
Is shining sun-like through the clouds of dust!"
Then Rustam, laughing heartily, replied:—
"Victorious fortune is with us, why fear
The Turkman king and dust of Turkman horse?
All told he is not five score thousand strong,
And were I by myself upon this plain,
What with my battle-ax, cuirass, and Rakhsh,
I should not trouble for Afrásiyáb
With all his mighty army and his dash;
Nay, any one of us upon the field
Would over-match the whole host of Túrán.
A battle-ground like this is all I need;
I want not I the Íránian warriors.
We have a band of seven cavaliers,
Such men of name, such swordsmen, that each one
Will match five hundred, two will match a thousand,
Skilled cavaliers and spearmen though they be.
V. 421 And now, cup-bearer! fill up to the brim
The goblet with the vintage of Zábul."
They poured the wine, and Rustam's spirits rose;
He took a bowl and toasted Kai Káús.
"I give the monarch of the age," he said,
"And may he flourish ever soul and body,"
Then kissed the ground. Again he took the cup,
And cried: "This goblet do I drain to Tús."
Thereat those princes of the worldlord rose
And prayed the paladin have them excused.
"We can no more," they said; "Iblís himself
Could not drink fair with thee. Wine, one-blow mace,
And battlefield are thine and thine alone."
Then from a golden cup the hero drank
Zawára's health in red wine of Zábul,
Whereat Zawára took the cup in hand,
And he too gave the health of Kai Káús,
Then quaffed the wine and kissed the face of earth,

While Rustam fell to praising him and said :—
" The brother doth the brother's cup essay !
A Lion he, the wine-cup is his prey."

§ 12

How Rustam fought with the Túránians

" O glory of the monarch and the chiefs ! "
Said Gív to Rustam, " I will seize and hold
The bridge against the foe, so that our men
May arm, for mirth is over." V. 422
With strung bow
He ran toward the bridge but found the king
Across already leading on his van.
Then matchless Rustam donned his tiger-skin,
Bestrode his huge fell Elephant, and went
With roarings like a bellowing crocodile
Against the Turkman host. Thou wouldst have said
That when Afrásiyáb caught sight of Rustam
Mailed, with such hands and breast and arms and neck
And shouldered battle-axe, he swooned away.
Tús and Gúdarz, the wielders of the lance,
Gurgín and Gív, the gallant cavaliers,
Bahrám, Barzín, Farhád, and Zanga son
Of Sháwarán, the warriors, sprang up,
All with their spears and Indian swords in hand,
And ranged themselves like leopards for the combat.
Gív, like a lion that hath lost its prey,
Rushed to the fight and with his whirling mace
Laid many stalwart Turkman chieftains low.
Their fortune was averse, the fighting-men
Of Chín recoiled. Afrásiyáb astound V. 423
Rushed forth to join the mellay. Rustam saw,
And, shouldering his massive mace and gripping V. 424
His charger firmly, came before the host

With lion's roars. Behind him was Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, in mail with mace of steel.
When the Túránians' eyes were growing dim,
And Rustam's helm touched heaven, Afrásiyáb
V. 425 Spake to Pírán the son of Wísa, saying:—
"O full of wisdom and my loyal chieftain,
Most famous of the Lions of Túrán,
Aspiring and redoubted! ply thy reins,
Go forth with speed, and clear the field of foes.
Írán is thine if thou dost conquer; thou
Hast elephantine form and lion's claws."
Pírán departed like a rushing wind,
Arrayed ten thousand Turkmans—gallant swordsmen
Of high renown—and came like fire on Rustam,
For victory or defeat both hung on him.
That hero foamed and, as thou wouldst have said,
Eclipsed the sun. He urged his charger on;
A roar arose as of the rising sea.
With shield o'er head and Indian sword in hand
He slew most of those chiefs. Afrásiyáb
Saw this from far and said thus to his nobles:—
"If they fight thus till dark there will not be
A single horseman left! Think we no more
Of battle. We came forth to fight the Íránians
And in our own conceit were lions then,
V. 426 Yet now I seem a fox as I survey
The plain, and feel a skulker from the fray!"

§ 13

How Pílsam fought with the Íránians

There was a warrior, by name Pílsam,
Of royal race and eager for renown,
His sire was glorious Wísa and his brother
Victorious Pírán. Both in Írán

And in Túrán he had no peer save Rustam.
On hearing what Afrásiyáb had said
He frowned with rage and, hasting to the king,
Cried in his eager longing for the fray:—
"A youthful warrior of this host am I.
What dust before me are the valiant Tús
And gallant Gív—that Lion known to fame—
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And brave Guráza! At the king's command
I will go lion-like, smite off their heads,
O'ercloud their moon, and bring their crowns to dust."
The king replied: "O famous warrior!
May victory be thine. Thou must prevail
And come back conquering and glorious."
Thereat Pílsam roared like a brazen trumpet, V. 427
Charged the Íránian centre swift as dust,
And struck to right and left with sword and ax,
With lion-roars assailed Gurgín like wind,
And smote upon the head his foeman's charger,
Which came down headlong in its agony.
This Gustaham, the well approved in war,
Beheld and, swiftly rushing from his post,
Made like a raging lion for Pílsam,
And closing with that fiercely blazing Fire
Thrust at his foeman's belt; the buckles held;
The spear was shivered in his grasp; he flung
The haft away. Pílsam drew his keen sword,
Struck Gustaham with fury on the crest,
And sent his helmet rolling, leaving him
Stunned and disarmed. When Zanga on the right
Saw that fierce struggle he advanced to help,
And marked the evil plight of Gustaham.
Pílsam the Crocodile opposed the charge,
And, coming with an Indian sword in hand,
Struck at and clave the mail of Zanga's steed,
Which tumbled prone. The gallant warrior fell,

Took up, and knit his mail-skirt round his waist
To strive afoot against the great Pílsam
Amid the dust—the prey against the lion.
Dark clouds of dust rose from the scene of strife.
Gív, looking from the centre of the host
And seeing earth dark in the heroes' eyes,
V. 428 Roared like the thunder on the mountain-top,
Or like the savage lion in the fight.
He went to aid his comrades, and all four
Attacked Pílsam. That hero blenched no jot,
But rushed upon them plying sword and mace:
The four chiefs' hands were paralysed with wonder.
Pírán, beholding from the centre, saw
His brother's desperate case, rushed forth to help him,
And shouted furiously to Gív: "O noble!
It is no glory for you four to fight
One lion-like and famous warrior."
He spake and charged amid a cloud of dust,
While Rustam too rushed bravely to the mellay
And smote with sword and axe and massive mace
The captains of the army of Túrán.
Then fled Pílsam, well knowing that that Dragon
Would have his life. The Íránian chiefs and warriors
Slew with the massive mace so many Turkmans
That corpses were piled up to reach the moon.
Afrásiyáb looked on and sighing cried:—
"Where is Alkús the warrior who wished
So oft to fight with Lions, in his cups
Would challenge Gív and plan a fight with Rustam?
Írán was all that he would talk of then,
Where are his ardour and his bluster now?"
V. 429 Alkús was told, urged on his night-hued steed,
And with his hands no doubt already bathed
In blood came to the centre to the king,
And cried aloud: "A man of war am I,
A Lion waiting. At the king's command

I will go forth to battle single-handed."
The monarch said: "Choose captains from the host."
More than a thousand valiant cavaliers
Went with him, carrying head-strewing lances,
And glittering like Jupiter and Venus.
Alkús as he approached the Íránians
Obscured the sun and moon in clouds of dust,
And when Zawára showed and challenged fight
Soon countered him and thought: "This should be Rustam,"
Because he knew the seed of Narímán.
Zawára charged in lion-wise, but when
His lance snapped, he was frayed and drew his sword.
They veiled the world with dust. Both falchions shivered.
They seized their maces. Quick as wind Alkús
Dealt such a blow as left Zawára senseless,
Who swooned and tumbled speechless from his saddle.
Alkús leaped down to take his foeman's head,
But Rustam seeing how his brother fared
Rushed like a fire toward him with a shout
Which shook Alkús' hand and dulled his sword.
At hearing Rustam's voice thou wouldst have said:— V. 430
"His heart showed through his skin." Swift as the wind
He mounted, all forgetful of his manhood,
And Rustam said: "Thou hadst not measured then
The Lion's claws and therefore wast so brave."
Then while Zawára, blood-stained, sorely wounded,
And battered by the mace, regained his saddle,
Alkús encountered Rustam and thereby
Robed his bark-saddle with a winding-sheet,
For thrusting with a spear at Rustam's girdle
He failed to pierce the mail, while Rustam thrust
A spear at his foe's head and dashed him down
As 'twere a mountain-crag to earth, his helmet
Drowned in his heart's blood, while both armies wondered.

Then fear came on the soldiers of Túrán,
While lion-like the seven warriors
Drew, and their gallant captains followed them
With massive maces laid upon their shoulders.
Afrásiyáb beheld them with amaze,
Turned, gazed upon his mighty men, and said:—
"The foe hath overcome you. Strive and battle
Like valiant pards."
The soldiers heard his voice,
And fell on Rustam in a mass, while he
Charged them in fury with the seven warriors.
They drave and routed all the Turkman host,
Incarnadined the land with brave men's blood,
And laid so many low that what with corpses
And trunkless heads no vacant space was seen
For troops to fight on, wheel, or pass between.

§ 14

How Afrásiyáb fled from the Battlefield

V. 431 Afrásiyáb turned rein on seeing this,
And fled, like some dark cloud, pursued by Rustam,
Who thus exhorted Rakhsh: "My clever steed!
Lag not in battle-time, for I will slay
The monarch by thine aid and make the plain
Like coral with his blood."
The fiery charger
Sped on so rapidly that thou hadst said:—
"His flanks have put forth wings!" Then Rustam loosed
The lasso from the straps and aimed to catch
His foeman round the waist. The leathern noose
Fell on his helm; the Turkmans' leader snatched
His neck away; again the wind-foot steed
Beneath him sped like fire. Afrásiyáb

Escaped, but with wet cheeks and drouthy mouth,
While all his horsemen hurried after him
With spirits broken and with shattered arms.
He sped like wind and overpassed the stream
With stricken heart, his soldiers mostly slain:
He searched the world for honey and found poison.
Of treasures and of thrones, of crowns and girdles,
Of swords and jerkins, jewelry and helms,
Of noble steeds caparisoned with gold,
Of casques and scimitars with golden scabbards,
And other gear, great store fell to the Íránians. V. 432
They gathered all and left the field, rejoicing,
They did not strip the slain or seek the fallen,
But went back to the hunting-ground and took
All kinds of steeds and equipage. They wrote
To Sháh Káús to tell of hunt and fight,
And how they had not lost a warrior;
Zawára had been thrown and that was all.
The paladin remained two weeks with mirth
Upon the scene of triumph, on the third
They sought the Sháh and saw his glorious crown.
The custom of our Wayside Inn is so,
One man hath quiet and another woe.
In this wise or in that time passeth by;
Why should a wise man feel anxiety?
The legends of this matter now are told,
Such as have reached us from the days of old.

PART III

SUHRÁB

ARGUMENT

The poet, after justifying in his prelude the ways of God to man in the matter of early death, tells how Rustam, in the course of one of his hunting expeditions to Túrán, marries Tahmína, the daughter of the king of Samangán. Rustam returns to Írán and is subsequently informed by Tahmína, who has remained at Samangán, that she has borne him a son—Suhráb. In after years Suhráb joins the host of Afrásiyáb in an invasion of Írán in the hope of meeting his father, who has been misled by Tahmína into forming a false estimate of their son's person and prowess. After a series of tragic misadventures father and son meet in single combat with fatal results.

NOTE

The story of Suhráb is purely episodic, it might be omitted from the present reign without any apparent solution of continuity, and it is the only tale in the whole Sháhnáma that is at all familiar to the English reader. It has been translated into English at least twice, and has been retold according to Western ideas by Matthew Arnold, who has also followed the incorrect account of the episode given in Sir John Malcolm's 'History of Persia,' i. 27, note, where Tahmína is represented as having informed Rustam that she had given birth to a daughter. The improbability of the story may thus be lessened for the English reader, but to the Oriental eye it is the very improbability that makes it so impressive, as being an illustration of the working out of destiny which frustrates the best intentions, over-rides all obstacles, and makes mankind the puppets of its will. There is no trace of this story in Pahlaví literature as at present known to us.

§ 8. White Castle, known also as Mount Sipand,[1] probably is identical with the Spe*n*tódáta of the Zandavasta [2] and the Spendy*á*d mountain of the Bundahish.[3] It was the scene of the death of

[1] See vol. i. p. 236. [2] DZA, ii. 289. [3] WPT, i. 39.

Narímán, Rustam's great-grandfather, of Rustam's second exploit,[1] and of the defeat and death at the hands of Káran of the Túránian hero Bármán,[2] who, it is worth noting, has reappeared as if nothing had happened.[3] Similarly Kulbád reappears.[4]

We are here introduced to a female warrior—Gurdáfríd—the only one in the poem, with the exception of Gurdya, the strong-minded and courageous sister of Bahrám Chubína. Gurdya, however, does not appear on the scene till the Sháhnáma is near its end. As for Gurdáfríd, she merely crosses Suhráb's path for a moment and nothing more is heard of her. This seems to show that the story of Suhráb was, like the rest of the Sháhnáma, based on existing materials. If Firdausí had invented the story himself it is almost inconceivable that he should not have made more of the relations between Suhráb and Gurdáfríd.[5]

§ 1

The Prelude

The story of Suhráb and Rustam hear: V. 433
Thou hast heard others; let it be thy part
To hear this too: 'tis fraught with many a tear,
And Rustam will enrage thy gentle heart.
Now if a rude gust should arise and bear
A yet unripened orange to the dust,
Shall I describe this as unfair or fair,
Shall I pronounce it tyrannous or just?
Where is the evil if we all must die?
Why clamour and appeal from what is right?
Thy spirit wotteth not this mystery;
Beyond the Veil there is no path in sight.
We all must reach the insatiable door,
The greedy door that openeth twice for none;
Yet so a better place may be in store
For thee, and heaven's eternal rest be won.

[1] Vol. i. p. 329 *seq.* [2] *Id.* p. 354. [3] § 7, and cf. vol. i. p. 48.
[4] See pp. 18, 264, and cf. vol. i. p. 361.
[5] A lament of Suhráb's for the loss of Gurdáfríd is added in C, but the couplets are asterisked and V rejects them.

Unless death swallowed all men up in turn
  Earth would be trampled down by young and old;
If fire in giving light shall also burn
  The matter is no marvel to behold,
For burn it will and that as readily
  As offshoots issue from an ancient stem,
And whether young or old the victims be
  Death's blast, like dread fire, hath no awe of them.
Should pleasure then a youthful mind engage
  Since years are not the only cause of death,
V. 434 Which is the end alike of youth and age
  Unless thou seek a passage in the Faith?
While if Salvation's light be in thy heart
  Thy lot as servant is to hold thy peace;
Be busied in preparing to depart,
  Let prayerful adoration never cease.
In serving God there is no mystery
  Unless the Dív consorteth with thy soul;
Be fervent here below and thou shalt be
  In perfect peace when thou hast reached thy goal.
The exploits of Suhráb I next shall tell,
And how the combat with his sire befell.

§ 2

How Rustam went to the Chace

I tell what rustic bard and archimage
Told from the legends of a bygone age:—
One morn in dudgeon Rustam rose to hunt,
Girt him, filled up his quiver, mounted Rakhsh,
And hied him to the marches of Túrán,
A savage Lion prowling after prey.
When he drew near the marches and beheld
The plain well stocked with onager, he flushed
Rose-like and smiled, then urging on his steed

He dropped much game with arrow, mace, and lasso.
He lit a fire with sticks, dry grass, and thorns,
Chose out a tree to serve him for a spit,
And set thereon a lusty onager— V. 435
A feather's weight to him! He tore the meat,
When roasted, from the bones and sucked the marrow,
Drank of a neighbouring stream and wooed repose,
While Rakhsh careered and grazed along the mead.
Some Turkman horsemen chanced upon the plain
And marked the tracks of Rakhsh. These they pursued
Beside the stream, observed him in the pasture,
Surrounded him, and with their royal lassos
Essayed to take him. Rakhsh perceiving this
Raged like a mighty lion. Lashing out
He laid two Turkmans low and with his teeth
Tore off another's head. Thus three were slain,
And still the head of Rakhsh escaped the noose;
At length the others threw from every side
Their lassos, caught him round the neck and took him,
Then walked him to the city, all desirous
To have a share in him.
When Rustam woke
From pleasant sleep and needed docile Rakhsh
He looked about the mead but found him not,
Whereat in dudgeon and astound he hurried
Toward Samangán. "Now whither shall I trudge,"
He said, "to 'scape my dark soul's shame, or how,
Thus armed with quiver, mace, helm, scimitar,
And tiger-skin cuirass, shall I o'erpass
The waste or make a shift to deal with foes? V. 436
How will the Turkmans say: 'Who stole his Rakhsh?
Thus matchless Rustam slept his life away!'
Now must I plod all helpless and forlorn;
Still let me arm, I yet may trace him out."
Thus with a weary, aching heart he went
In evil case and much discouragement.

§ 3

How Rustam came to the City of Samangán

When Rustam drew near Samangán the king
And nobles heard: "The Crown-bestower cometh
Afoot for Rakhsh escaped him in the chace."
The king's chief nobles, who wore crowns themselves,
Went forth to welcome Rustam, and all said:—
"Can this be Rustam or the rising sun?"
The monarch went to him afoot attended,
And asked: "Who dared to meet thee in the fight?
We of this city are thy friends and servants,
We and our goods are both at thy disposal,
The heads and lives most dear to us are thine."
Then Rustam, seeing that the words were honest,
Replied: "In yonder meads my Rakhsh while ranging
Without a rein or halter strayed from me,
And I have traced him from the river-side
V. 437 To Samangán. If thou recoverest him
My thanks are thine besides the recompense
Of one that doth aright; should he be lost
I will behead no few among thy chiefs."
The king made answer: "O exalted man!
None will presume to thwart thee. Come and be
My guest and be not wroth; all will be well.
Let us refresh our hearts with wine to-night
And keep them free from care, for wrath and passion
Advantage not while gentleness will draw
The snake out of its hole, and Rustam's Rakhsh—
A steed so known—will not continue hidden.
We will seek out thy Rakhsh and bring him quickly,
Thou doughty veteran!"
Rustam heard with joy,
And easy in his mind agreed to pay

A visit to the king who, greatly pleased,
Bestowed him in the palace and stood slave-like
Before him, then invited from the city
And army chiefs to entertain with Rustam,
And bade the cooks to spread the board. The guests
And minstrels strove to banish Rustam's gloom,
While black-eyed, rose-cheeked Idols of Taráz
Gave wine and feast and music greater charm.
At length bemused and drowsy Rustam went
To where the king had furnished for his guest
Musk and rose-water, and a place of rest.

§ 4

How Tahmína, the Daughter of the King of Samangán, came to Rustam

At noon of night, while Phosphor crossed the sky, V. 438
There came mysterious whispers, Rustam's door
Was softly opened, and a slave who bare
A taper savouring of ambergris
Walked stately toward the drunken sleeper's couch.
Behind the slave there was a moon-faced girl
Sun-bright, all scent and hue, with arching eyebrows
And locks that hung in tresses lasso-like,
In stature like a lofty cypress-tree,
With cheeks carnelians of Yaman in colour
And mouth as straitened as a lover's heart.
All soul was she and keen of intellect,
Thou wouldst have said: "She is not of the earth."
The lion-hearted Rustam marvelled at her
And calling on the Maker asked: "Thy name?
What seek'st thou midst the murk of night? Thy will?"
She said: "Tahmína: and thou well mayst say
That mine affliction teareth me in twain.

Sole daughter of the king of Samangán,
And by descent half lion and half pard,
There is no mate for me among the kings,
Nor are there many like me under heaven.
No one hath seen me yet outside the bower,
No one hath ever heard me spoken of,
But many and many a story have I heard
Of thee from every one—just like romance!
V. 439 How dív and lion, pard and crocodile,
Thou fearest not, thou art so deft of hand!
How thou departest to Túrán by night
And roamest there unsleeping and alone,
Dost roast an onager to make a meal
And set air wailing with thy scimitar!
How at the sight of thee with mace in hand
The hearts of lions and the hides of pards
Are rent! How eagles seeing thy naked sword
Dare not to swoop upon their quarry, and how
Great lions bear the traces of thy lasso,
And clouds rain blood in terror of thy spear!
Such are the tales of thee that I have heard!
Oft have I bit my lips in wonderment
And longed to see thy shoulders, neck, and breast.
God hath ordained thy sojourn in this city,
And now if thou wilt have me I am thine—
I who was never seen by fowl or fish—
Because for one thing I adore thee so,
Have sacrificed my prudence to my passion,
And for another—haply God Almighty
May lay upon my breast a child of thine.
Oh! may he be like thee in might and manhood,
And heaven assign to him both Sol and Saturn!
Moreover I will bring back Rakhsh to thee
And put all Samangán beneath thy feet."
The matchless Rustam heard her to the end.
He saw what beauty and intelligence

Were hers, and that she brought him news of Rakhsh.
Perceiving that the affair would turn out well
He bade an archimage—a man of worship—
Go and demand the maiden from her sire.
The king, that noble Cypress, was well pleased
To be affined to Rustam, and bestowed
Tahmína on him with the usual rites. V. 440
The people all poured out their souls with joy
And called down blessings on the paladin :—
"May this New Moon prove fortunate to thee,
And be thy foes' heads plucked out by the roots."
Night was not longsome while his mate was by,
But when the sun was bright he longed to throw
The musky lasso off. He wore an armlet—
A famous one. That gave he to Tahmína,
And said: "Keep this. If thou shalt bear a daughter
Then plait it in her hair, and choose a time
Propitious, and auspicious auguries;
While if the stars vouchsafe to thee a son
Bind round his arm this token of his father.
He will be like Sám son of Narímán
In stature and a Karímán[1] in manhood
And character, and bring down soaring eagles.
The sun will scorch not him."
He passed the night
In converse with his bride, and when the sun
Shone bright, and decked the earth with lovesomeness, V. 441
In taking leave he clasped her to his breast
And showered kisses on her eyes and head,
But fair Tahmína turned in tears from him
To be the spouse of pain and misery.
The noble king of Samangán approached,
Inquired of Rustam how the night had sped,
And, having heard, gave him good news of Rakhsh,
News that rejoiced the crown-bestower's heart.

[1] The father of Narímán and great-great-grandfather of Rustam.

He came, caressed the steed, and saddled him,
Pleased both with glossy Rakhsh and with the king.
Then homeward to Zábulistán he went,
But no one heard him speak of this event.

§ 5

The Birth of Suhráb

Nine months passed and a moon-like babe was born;
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis elephantine Rustam,"
Or else: "'Tis lion-Sám," or "Narímán,"
And since the babe smiled and was bright of blee
Tahmína gave to him the name Suhráb.
He looked a year old in a month, his chest
Was like his sire's, at three he exercised
In arms, at five he had a lion-heart,
At ten none dared encounter him in fight.
He bluntly asked his mother once: "Now tell me,
Since none of my milk-fellows can compare
With me, and my head reacheth to the sky,
V. 442 Of what stock am I and of what descent?
What shall I say when asked about my father?
Thou shalt not live unless thou answer me."
His mother said: "Then listen and rejoice,
But be not rash. Thou art the son of Rustam,
The hero of the elephantine form,
The progeny of Zál the son of Sám,
And Narímán. Thy head out-toppeth heaven
Because thou comest of the famous stock,
For never since the Maker made the world
Hath there appeared a cavalier like Rustam,
Nor one like Sám the son of Narímán,
Whose head the heaven itself dared not to touch."
She brought and showed a letter from his sire,
Three bright gems, and three purses filled with gold,

Sent to him by his father at his birth
With these words: "Guard these well, because thy sire
Hath sent them unto thee, O noble child!"
His mother said besides: "Afrásiyáb
Must not know aught hereof. He is the foe
Of Rustam and the troubler of Túrán.
May he ne'er seek revenge upon thyself
And slay the son in dudgeon at the sire.
Moreover, if thy father shall perceive
Of what a stamp thou art, so high and proud,
Then will he summon thee and rend my heart."
Suhráb replied: "A thing like this will out. V. 443
Old chieftains, warriors in the past, recount
His deeds. What right hadst thou to hide that I
Come of such fighting stock? Now will I gather
A boundless host of Turkman warriors,
Drive from his throne Káús, will cut away
From Tús his foothold in Írán, and leave not
Gurgín, Gúdarz, and Gív, or Gustaham
Son of Naudar, or warrior Bahrám,
But give the treasure, throne, and crown to Rustam
Instead of Sháh Káús; then from Írán
March forth to take Afrásiyáb's own seat,
And raise my spearhead higher than the sun.
I will do lion's deeds and make thee mistress
Of all Írán. Since Rustam is the sire
And I the son none other shall be king.
When sun and moon are shining in the sky
Why should the stars set up their crowns on high?"

§ 6

How Suhráb chose his Charger

He said moreover: "Thou shalt see my prowess,
But I must have a charger swift of foot

With hoofs of steel flint-shattering, in strength
V. 444 Like elephants, in flight like birds, in water
Like fish, and on the land like deer, to bear
My warrior-breast and neck, mine ax and mace:
I must be mounted to encounter foes."
His mother's head rose o'er the shining sun
At hearing this. She bade the herdsman bring
His herds of horses for Suhráb to choose
A charger. So they gathered to the city
The herds that wandered over hill and desert,
And when some large-limbed, lusty steed appeared
Suhráb flung round its neck the leathern noose,
Then laid his hand upon the beast to prove it
And made it grovel. Thus his might broke down
Full many a noble steed; he could not find
One adequate, and grieved. At length a warrior
Approached the elephantine youth and said:—
"I have a colt—one of the breed of Rakhsh—
In strength a lion and as fleet as wind.
He is as 'twere a valley-treading mountain
And skimmeth like a bird along the waste.
In strength and swiftness he is like the sun;
None ever saw so fleet a roan. Beneath
The stamping of his hoofs the Bull-fish [1] quaketh;
His leap is like the lightning; on the mountains
He goeth like the raven; on the water
Like fish and water-fowl; upon the desert
Like shaft from bow, pursuing and o'ertaking
The enemy."
Suhráb laughed out for joy,
And when they brought to him that glossy charger
V. 445 Both proved it and approved it, coaxed, caressed,
Then saddled it, and mounted. He appeared
Like Mount Bístún; his spear was pillar-like.
He said: "Since I have gotten such a steed

[1] See vol. i. p. 71.

I must ride forth at once and turn the day
Of Kai Káús to gloom."
He made him ready
To fight the Íránians, and a host assembled.
He then approached his grandsire, asking leave
To go, and help in going: "I am fain
To seek Írán and see my glorious sire."
Thereat the king provided him with arms
Of every kind, thrones, diadems, and casques,
Steeds, camels, belts, gold, gems, and Rúman jerkins.
He marvelled at that youth of tender age
And freely gave a royal equipage.

§ 7

How Afrásiyáb sent Bármán and Húmán to Suhráb

Afrásiyáb had news: "Suhráb hath launched
His ship, a host hath gathered unto him.
Although his mouth still savoureth of milk
His mind is set on shaft and scimitar;
His sword will purge the earth, and now he seeketh
To fight Káús. He feareth none. Why more?
His prowess hath shown higher than his birth."
Now when Afrásiyáb had heard these words V. 446
They pleasured him, he laughed and showed his joy.
Then from the valiant captains of the host—
Those that were wielders of the massive mace—
He chose two chiefs; Húmán was one, the other
Bármán; no laggards they when Lions strove.
He gave to them twelve thousand valiant troops,
And said: "Be this your secret policy:
The father must not recognise his son
By any ties of instinct, love, or race;
So, when the twain encounter, in good sooth
The matchless Rustam will be put to it.

It may be that this lion-man will slay him.
Then will we press Káús, seize on Írán,
With Rustam gone, and settle with Suhráb
Some night by binding him in endless sleep;
While should he perish by his father's hand
That hero's heart will never cease to burn."

Those two shrewd paladins went to Suhráb,
Preceded by a present from the king—
Ten steeds caparisoned, ten mules of burden,
A turquoise throne with ivory steps, a crown
Of amber tipped with pearls—and took a letter
Of adulation to the noble youth:—
"If thou shalt seize the Íránian throne the age
V. 447 Will rest from strife. We are not far apart;
Írán, Túrán, and Samangán are one.
I send thee troops enough, sit on the throne
And don the crown. Túrán hath no such leaders
And brave hearts as Húmán and as Bármán,
Whom I dispatch to thee as guests, to be
At thy command, to fight, if thou wouldst fight,
And make the world strait to thine enemies."

Now when Suhráb was ware of their approach
He girt his loins and with his grandsire went
Like wind to meet Húmán, rejoiced to see
Such troops. Húmán for his part was amazed
To see the neck and shoulders of Suhráb,
Then gave to him the letter of the king,
The gifts, the horses, and the mules of burden,
And with Bármán delivered the king's message.
Now when the atheling had read the letter
He beat the tymbals and led forth the host.
Earth was all troops and clamour, neither lion
Nor crocodile could fight him. Thus he led
The host toward Írán, burned everywhere
The cultivated parts, and left all bare.

§ 8

How Suhráb came to White Castle

White Castle was a stronghold of Írán
And veteran Hajír was castellan— V. 448
A man of might and courage, mace and arrow—
For Gazhdaham was failing though still brave
And venturesome. His daughter,[1] who was proud,
Renowned, and malapert, bore arms and fought
On horseback. As Suhráb approached, Hajír
Saw him and mounting on his steed like dust
Sped forth upon the field. Suhráb enraged,
And drawing forth the scimitar of fight,
Rushed from the host as 'twere a blast and cried:—
"O fool to throw thy life away and come
Alone! Sit tight and firmly grasp thy reins.
What are thy name and lineage? She that bare
Will have to weep for thee." V. 449
Hajír replied:—
"Enough! I need no help in fighting thee.
Hajír am I, a warrior and chieftain.
I will take off thy head to send the Sháh
And leave the vultures to consume thy body."
Suhráb laughed out and charged; both hurled their spears
Too fast for eyes to follow. Brave Suhráb,
Strong as an elephant, came on like fire
Upon his moving mountain of a steed.
Hajír thrust at his waist; the spearpoint glanced.
Suhráb the Lion drove the weapon back,
Struck with the butt his foe's waist lustily,
And threw him like a boulder to the earth,
As though the matter were not worth a thought,
Astound in heart and soul. Suhráb dismounted,

[1] Gurdáfríd.

Sat on his foeman's breast, and had in mind
To cut his head off, but Hajír with effort
Turned on his right side and entreated quarter.
Suhráb accorded it, well satisfied,
Gave him some cautions, made him fast in bonds,
And sent him to Húmán. Those in the hold
On hearing what had chanced cried mournfully:—
"Hajír is lost among the enemy!"

§ 9

How Suhráb fought with Gurdáfríd

When she whose sire was Gazhdaham had heard:—
V. 450 "The chief is worsted!" she was grieved, exclaimed
In her distress, and heáved a deep cold sigh.
A woman like some valiant cavalier
Was she and ever famous in the fight.
Her name was Gurdáfríd, and none as yet
Had seen her match. Hajír's discomfiture
So shamed her that her tulip-cheeks became
Like red chrysanthemums.[1] Time pressed, she armed,
Concealed her tresses underneath her mail,
Secured her Rúman casque upon her head,
And came down, like a lion, from the hold
With girded waist upon a wind-foot steed.
She sped like dust and cried in thunder-tones:—
"What are these troops and who commandeth them?
What lusty Crocodile is there among you
To match himself with me in single combat?"
None volunteered until Suhráb beheld her.
He bit his lips and laughed. "Again," said he,
"An onager hath come within the toils
Of him that hath both strength and scimitar."
He armed like wind, put on a helm of Chín,

[1] Khír. Cf. WPT, i. 104.

And rushed out to encounter Gurdáfríd,
Who when she saw him strung her bow up, drew it,
And broadened out her breast. No bird had found
A passage through her shafts; she showered them
Upon Suhráb and wheeled to left and right.
He saw and was abashed, waxed wroth and charged,
His shield above his head. Thus pressed she hung
Her bow upon her arm and, while her steed V. 451
Pranced to the clouds, couched at Suhráb her lance,
And plied her reins with fury. He too shook
His reins and urged his charger on like lightning,
Fierce as a leopard, at his doughty foe.
He thrust a deadly dart with all his strength,
Struck Gurdáfríd upon the belt and rent
Her coat of mail, but even as she reeled
She drew her sword and clave the dart asunder,
Regained her seat and sent the dust-clouds flying;
But liking not such fighting turned and fled.
He urged his dragon-steed, and he too made
In wrath day dark with dust. He pressed upon her
With loud cries, jostled her, and snatched her helm.
Her hair escaped, her face shone like the sun.
He said: "It is a girl! Her head of hair
Is worthy of a crown. If such a girl,"
He said amazed, "come from the Íránian host
Upon the field, good sooth their cavaliers
Will send dust cloudward on the day of battle!"
He loosed his coiled up lasso from the straps
And caught her round the waist, then said to her:—
"Why seekest thou the fray, O moon-faced maid?
No onager like thee hath ever come V. 452
Within my toils. Thou wilt not 'scape my clutch,
So struggle not."
She saw no other course,
So showed her face and said: "O warrior,
Midst warriors a lion! two hosts watch

Our prowess with the mace and scimitar,
And now that I have shown my face and hair
The troops will say: 'He sent the dust-clouds flying
And all to fight a girl!' 'Twill be disgrace
To persevere in such a fight as this.
Chiefs should be wise, so let us keep it dark
And save thee from reproach on mine account.
Our troops and stronghold are at thy command,
There is no need to fight, the castle, treasure,
And castellan are thine when thou shalt please."
She showed her face, her smiles displayed the pearls
Within her jujube-lips, a garden she
In Paradise; no villager e'er set
So tall a cypress. She had eyes like deer's,
With arching eyebrows, and thou wouldst have said:—
"She bloometh ever."
"Keep thy word," said he,
"For thou hast seen me on the day of battle.
Trust not yon castle-wall, it is not higher
Than heaven, and my mace will bring it down,
While no foe's lance will ever reach my neck."
V. 453 She turned and rode with him toward the hold,
And Gazhdaham himself came to the gate.
They opened it and Gurdáfríd came in
Both bruised and bound. They shut it and lamented
For her and for Hajír. Then Gazhdaham
Approached with chiefs and troops, and said to her:—
"Brave-hearted lion-smiter! we were troubled
On thine account. Thy fighting and address
Have not disgraced us, and no foe hath harmed
Thy life, thank God!"
Then laughing much she went
Upon the ramparts to observe the foe,
Beheld Suhráb still mounted, and exclaimed:—

"O warrior of Túrán! why take such pains?
Be off with you and give up battlefields."
Suhráb replied: "O fair of face! I swear
By crown and throne and sun and moon to raze
These ramparts to the ground and capture thee,
Thou minx! Thou wilt repent thy foolish words
When thou art writhing in thy helplessness.
Where is thy promise?"
But she laughed and mocked him:—
"The Turkmans win no helpmates from Írán,
And thou hast failed with me, but never mind!
Thou art no Turkman who art so commended
Among the great, and with such strength and limbs
Art peerless midst the paladins! However,
When news shall reach the Sháh: 'A chief is leading V. 454
An army from Túrán,' he will march forth
With Rustam whom ye cannot stand against,
And all thy host will perish. What mishap
Will then descend upon thy head I know not,
But woe is me that such a neck and shoulder
Should disappear within the maw of pards!
So do not trust too much those arms of thine
Or else the stupid ox will graze beside thee.
'Twere best to issue orders for retreat."
Suhráb, who thought the hold his own, was shamed.
He gave to pillage all the land and crops
Around the walls, then for a moment washed
The evil hand, and said: "Our time for action
Is not to-day; our hands are stayed from fight.
At daybreak we will raise dust from these walls
And carry war's alarms inside the place."
With that he turned about his charger's rein
And took the way to his own camp again.

§ 10

The Letter of Gazhdaham to Káús

Now when Suhráb had gone old Gazhdaham
Called for a scribe to write to Kai Káús,
Then hurried off a speedy messenger
And, having praised the Sháh, reported thus:—
"A mighty host of valiant warriors
Attacketh us, led by a paladin,
Whose years do not exceed twice seven at most,
In stature taller than a lofty cypress,
And in his aspect like the shining sun.
His breast is lion-like, his mien is stately.
I have not looked on such a hand and mace
V. 455 Within Írán. Whenas he brandisheth
His Indian scimitar it shameth him
To fight mere seas and mountains. Rattling thunder
Is no match for his voice, or for his arm
Our trenchant sword. No peer within Írán
Or in Túrán hath he. This chief is named
Suhráb, and feareth not dív, elephant,
Or lion; thou mayst say: 'Tis surely Rustam,
At least some hero sprung from Narímán!'
The brave Hajír rode out to challenge him,
But, as I saw, no longer kept his seat
Than while a warrior might wink an eye,
Or scent go up a nostril to the brain.
Suhráb unhorsed him to his great amazement.
He is not hurt, and they have spared his life,
But he is sorry and hath got his skinful
Of anguish. Many Turkman cavaliers
Have I beheld, but never heard of one
With such a seat. God grant he grapple not
With one of us between the battle-lines;
I would have none, e'en though a Mount of flint,

Meet him upon the plain. The earth would pity
That Mount if he should charge it in the fight,
And if the Sháh shall stop to breathe, march forth
No host, and set no ambuscade, consider
The Glory of Írán as gone, the world
As panic-stricken by this warrior's sword-point.
Since he is Strength itself he will despoil us,
And none can grapple with him hand to hand,
Or ever saw so skilled a rider. 'He,' V. 456
Thou wouldest say, 'is Sám the cavalier.'
We cannot fight this eager warrior
With such a mace, grip, and dexterity.
Know that the fortune of our warriors noddeth,
And that his greatness reacheth to the sky.
To-night we pack the baggage and withdraw,
For if we tarry we shall make no fight,
To say no more; these walls will not withstand
One at whose rush a lion turneth laggard."
The letter sealed he called a messenger,
And said: "Be out of sight of them by dawn,"
And having sent the letter on its way
Prepared to follow it without delay.

§ 11

How Suhráb took White Castle

Whenas the sun rose o'er the mountain-heights
The soldiers of Túrán girt up their loins,
And spear in hand Suhráb the chief bestrode
His swift-paced charger, purposing to capture
The garrison and bind them like a flock;
But having, roaring like a lion, forced
The gates, he saw no man of name within,
For in the night the garrison had fled
With Gazhdaham, because beneath the hold

There was a way not wotted by the foe.
V. 457 Those still inside concerned with the defence
Or otherwise came to Suhráb as bidden,
And sought by every means to save their lives.
He looked for Gurdáfríd but found her not.
His heart was fain for love and union with her.
"Woe's me!" he thought, "the bright Moon is beclouded!"
V. 458 Káús received the letter and was grieved.
He called the captains of the host to counsel—
V. 459 Tús and Gúdarz son of Kishwád, and Gív,
Gurgín, Bahrám, and brave Farhád—and read
Aloud to them the news about Suhráb.
He said in private: "This will cost us time,
V. 460 And Gazhdaham saith naught to comfort us.
What shall we do, and what will cure this smart?
Who in Írán can fight him?"
All agreed
That Gív should go to Rustam at Zábul
To say: "The throne of empire is in danger,"
And summon him to take the field for war,
Because the Íránians looked to him for shelter.
A scribe as they discussed was sitting by
In that the case was one of urgency.

§ 12

How Káús wrote to Rustam and summoned him from Zábulistán

The Sháh then bade indite to famous Rustam
A letter, and began by praising him:—
"Be thy heart prudent and thy spirit bright.
Know that a Turkman chieftain with his host
Hath come and is beleaguering White Castle.
He is a brave, heroic paladin,

In form an elephant, in heart a lion.
None in Írán can fight him; thou alone,
That art so good at need, canst dim his lustre,
Thou heart and back-bone of the Íránian chiefs,
Who hast the claws and might of lions! Thou
Didst take the country of Mázandarán,
And in Hámávarán undo our bonds.
Sol weepeth at thy mace, and at thy sword V. 461
Mars grilleth. Indigo is not so dark
As dust-clouds raised by Rakhsh; no elephant
Can match thee in the fight; thou lassoest lions;
Thy spear-point scatheth mountains. In all ills
Thou art the shelter of Írán. The warriors
Through thee exalt their helms. A grievous matter
Confronteth us; I ache to think thereof.
The warriors in counsel read a letter
From Gazhdaham and were agreed that Gív
Should bear thee this account of good and ill.
Now when thou readest this by day or night
Ope not thy lips for words, and if thou have
A posy in thy hand stay not to smell it,
But act with promptitude and show thy face,
Because unless thou march forth from Zábul
With wary horsemen and shalt raise the war-cry,
To judge by that which Gazhdaham hath told
None will confront this warrior."
This sealed
The Sháh gave swift as wind to gallant Gív,
And said: "Be instant, ply thy fleet steed's rein.
Whenas thou reachest Rustam neither tarry, V. 462
Nor sleep, within Zábul; if thou arrive
By night return next day. Thus say to him:—
'A war is imminent, and in thine absence
We cannot hold the foe of small account.'"
Gív took it and sped night and day like wind,
No rest, no sleep, no water, and no food,

Until Zál heard the cry: "A cavalier
Approacheth from Írán as swift as dust."
The matchless Rustam met him with the troops
And nobles wearing helmets. When they met,
Gív and the warriors great and small dismounted,
And Rustam too who asked news of the Sháh,
And of Írán. They went thence to his palace
To rest awhile. Gív told his errand, gave
The letter, spake much of Suhráb, delivered
His other tidings and the presents sent.
When Rustam heard and read he laughed amazed,
And said: "A horseman hath appeared like Sám!
Now from our people this would not be strange,
But from the Turkmans 'tis incredible.
None sayeth, and I know not, whence he is.
The daughter of the king of Samangán
Bare me a son but he is still a child.
The noble boy at present wotteth not
Of warfare, of attack, and self-defence.
I sent his mother gold and precious stones
V. 463 In plenty, and the messenger brought answer:—
'The darling is not growing very fast,
But quaffeth wine with lips that savour milk.'
No doubt he will be eager soon for war,
And then his onslaught will be lion-like;
He will lay low the head of many a horseman;
But as for what thou sayest, O paladin!
'He came to fight us, vanquished brave Hajír,
And bound him with the lasso head and foot!'
The Lion's whelp, though grown both brave and doughty,
Could not do that. Come, go we to Zál's palace,
Rejoicing, then consider plans and who
This lucky Turkman paladin may be."
They sought the ancestral hall and stayed awhile
V. 464 In unconcern, then Gív again applied

To Rustam, praising him and saying: "Hero,
And chief of paladins! may crown and throne
Be bright to thee who art the crown's adornment,
Thou favourite of fortune! Sháh Káús
Said thus: 'Sleep not within Zábulistán.
If thou arrive by night return next day,
For God forbid that war should press on us.'
Now, O exalted and most glorious chief!
Let us depart in all haste to Írán."

But Rustam answered: "There is naught to fear,
For everything will end in dust at last.
Abide we here to-day in merriment
Naught recking of Káús and of the chiefs.
One day will we remain to breathe ourselves
And put some liquor to our thirsty lips;
Thereafter we will hasten to the Sháh
And show the heroes of Írán the way
In case bright fortune be not yet awake.
At all events the matter is a trifle,
The rising sea will quench the fiercest flame.
E'en from afar my flag will fray his heart
Amid a feast. How can he be like Rustam—
The master of the scimitar and mace—
Or Sám the hardy, brave, and circumspect?
He will not prove so eager for the fray.
We need not take such matters seriously."

They took the wine in hand and grew bemused
With drinking to the monarch and to Zál.
Next morning Rustam though crop-sick made ready
To start, but tarrying through drunkenness
Gave orders to the cooks to spread a feast.
The banquet done they held a drinking-bout
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
Next day he held another sunny-bright V. 465
And on the third day brought out wine at dawn,
Forgetful of Káús. Upon the fourth

Gív, ready to depart, said thus to Rustam:—
"Káús is rash and hasty; to his mind
This is no trifle. He was vexed and anxious,
And would not eat or slumber or repose.
By thus delaying in Zábulistán
We place him in a strait; he will be wroth
And in his headstrong humour seek revenge."
But Rustam answered: "Give it not a thought,
For none will chafe at us."
He gave command
To saddle Rakhsh and blow the brazen trumpets.
The horsemen of Zábul came at the call
In mail—a mighty army. He therein
Installed Zawára as chief paladin.

§ 13

How Káús was wroth with Rustam

Tús and Gúdarz son of Kishwád met Rustam
One day's march from the court. Both he and they
Alighted and saluted heartily.
They reached the court all loyalty and mirth,
But, when they did obeisance, Kai Káús
V. 466 Made no response but frowned on them in anger,
And bare him like a lion of the wood,
First stormed at Gív, then wholly lost to shame
Proceeded: "Who is Rustam that he thus
Should disobey me and break fealty?
Had I a sword I would smite off his head
As 'twere an orange. Seize him! Gibbet him
Alive, and name him not to me again."
Gív's heart was pained; he cried: "Wilt thou lay hand
On Rustam thus?"
But upon this the Sháh

Raged at them both, so that all present marvelled.
He bade Tús: "Go and hang them both alive,"
Arose himself, and flamed like fire from reeds,
While Tús drew near and seized the hand of Rustam,
To all the warriors' wonder, purposing
To lead him forth and to beguile his wrath;
But Rustam furious with Káús replied:—
"Indulge not such a fire within thy breast.
Thy deeds grow worse and worse! Thou art not fit
For sovereignty. Hang for thyself yon Turkman
Alive, then rage and scorn thine enemies.
Mázandarán, Sagsár, Hámávarán,
Rúm, Misr, and Chín are all my charger's thralls,
My sword and arrows have transfixed their livers.
Thou livest but through me. Why waste thy heart V. 467
In vengeance?"
In his wrath he struck the hand
Of Tús, thou wouldst have said: "An elephant
Hath struck him!" Tús fell headlong to the ground
While Rustam passed him by with angry mien,
Went out, and mounted Rakhsh in wrath, exclaiming:—
"I conquer lions and distribute crowns,
And who is Sháh Káús when I am angry,
Or Tús that he should lay a hand on me?
My might and my successes are from God,
Not from the Sháh or host. Earth is my slave
And Rakhsh my throne, a mace my signet-ring,
A helm my crown; my mates are sparth and spearhead,
My two arms and my heart my Sháh. I lighten
Night with my sword and scatter heads in battle.
Why doth he vex me? I am not his slave
But God's. The warriors called me to be Sháh,
But I refused the throne of sovereignty
And looked to custom, law, and precedent.
Do I deserve thy words? Art thou my patron?
Mine was the throne. I set Kubád thereon.

What care I for Káús, his wrath and bluster?
If I had not fetched Kai Kubád myself,
When he had fallen into low estate,
And brought him to Írán from Mount Alburz,
Thou hadst not belt or vengeful scimitar,
Or might and majesty entitling thee
To speak a word to Zál the son of Sám."

V. 468 He told the Íránians: "Valorous Suhráb
Will come and leave not either great or small;
So make shift, all of you! to save your lives,
And let discretion be your remedy.
Ye will not see me more within Írán:
The land is yours and mine the vulture's wing."

He smote his steed and left them while his skin
Split, thou hadst said, with rage. The nobles' hearts
Were troubled; they were sheep, he was their shepherd.
"Here," said they to Gúdarz, "is work for thee;
Thine is the hand to make the broken whole;
Thy words no doubt will influence the Sháh.
Go then to this insensate, speak to him,
Ply him with patient and persuasive speech:
Perchance thou mayst restore our fallen fortune."

Then all those warrior-nobles sat in conclave—
Gív and Gúdarz and lion-like Bahrám,
Ruhhám and brave Gurgín. They said: "The Sháh
Regardeth not the feelings of the great.
Since Rustam, who is chief of paladins,
First saved Káús none else hath succoured him
In all his straits and dangers. When the dívs
Bound in Mázandarán the Sháh and us
What toil and hardship Rustam underwent
On his account, and rent the fierce dívs' reins,
Then set the Sháh upon the throne and summoned
The mighty men to do him reverence!
Another time too when our sovereign's feet
Wore heavy fetters in Hámávarán

What monarchs Rustam slaughtered for his sake
And never turned away but brought Káús
Home to his throne, and did obeisance to him!
If Rustam's recompense must be to hang V. 469
Then we must flee just when at such a crisis
We should take action."
Thereupon Gúdarz
Made haste to go before the Sháh and said
Thus: "What hath Rustam done that thou shouldst send
The dust up from Írán to-day? Art thou
Forgetful of Hámávarán, forgetful
Of what the dívs did in Mázandarán,
That thou sayst: 'Put him living on the gibbet?'
Vain words become not Sháhs. When he hath gone,
And that great host and wolf-like paladin
Have come, whom hast thou left to take the field
And strew the dark dust o'er him? Gazhdaham
By sight or hearsay knoweth all thy warriors,
Yet saith: 'Ne'er let a cavalier propose
To fight Suhráb. Small wisdom 'twere for any,
Though brave as Rustam, to encounter him.'
Kings should be wise, for haste and wrath avail not."
The Sháh, perceiving that Gúdarz spake justly,
Repented of his folly and replied:—
"Thy rede is right; the old give best advice.
Now go to Rustam, treat him courteously, V. 470
Induce him to forget my hastiness,
Assure him that my favour is restored,
And bring him hither to illume my soul."
Gúdarz went after Rustam with all speed,
Attended by the leaders of the host.
They gathered round him and saluted saying:—
"Live happy evermore, be all the world
Beneath thy feet, and mayst thou sit for ever
Upon the throne. Thou knowest that Káús

Is brainless and no picker of his words
When angered, but regretteth them anon,
And groweth reconciled through sheer good nature.
If Rustam be aggrieved against the Sháh
The Íránians have done naught to drive him hence
And hide his glorious face. The Sháh moreover
Is sorry for those words of his and gnaweth
His hand's back in chagrin."

The hero said:—

"I need not anything of Kai Káús.
A saddle is my throne, a casque my crown,
My mail my raiment and my purpose death.
What is Káús to me? A pinch of dust.
Why should I fear or tremble at his wrath?
Do I deserve such unbecoming words
From one that I released from bonds and led
To crown and throne? Once in Mázandarán
I fought against the dívs, and once I fought
The monarch of Hámávarán and freed
Káús in his foe's grip from bonds and woe.
V. 471 Now I have had enough; my heart is full;
I fear but holy God."

As soon as Rustam
Had had his fill of speech Gúdarz rejoined:—

"The Sháh and famous warriors suspect
That thou art frightened at this Turkman chief.
They say in private: 'Gazhdaham was right,
Our fields and fells will know us now no more,
For sithens Rustam is afraid of fighting
'Tis not for thee and me to tarry here.'
I noticed that the Sháh's ill will and wrath
Made hue and cry at court, and all men spake
About the brave Suhráb. Eclipse not thou
Thy high fame in the world by this withdrawal,
And further, since a hostile host is near,
Dim not this crown and throne so wantonly,

For we have been insulted by Túrán,
And none whose Faith is pure approveth that."
The matchless hero all amazed replied:—
"I would not live a coward, I would tear
My soul out first. I flee, as well thou knowest,
Because the monarch scorned me, not from fight."
He shrank from that reproach, retraced his steps,
And came to Sháh Káús, who seeing him
Arose and thus excused what had occurred:—
"My temper is by nature choleric,
And trees must grow as God hath planted them.
Through this new, unexpected foe my heart
Was faint as a new moon. I sought a cure
And sent for thee. Thy tarrying made me wroth, V. 472
But having wronged thee, elephantine chief!
I sorrowed and my mouth was filled with dust."
Then Rustam answered him: "The world is thine.
We are thy subjects, thine is to command.
I am a liege, if worthy of the name,
Before thy gate to do thy will. Thou art
The Sháh, the lord of earth; I am thy slave."
Káús replied: "O paladin! be bright
Of mind for evermore. To-day we hold
A banquet and to-morrow think of battle."
He had a royal pleasure-house made ready;
Its hall was like a garden in the spring.
They called the chiefs and scattered gems for joy.
Half through the night they revelled and their talk
Was of the doings of the mighty men.
They drank till hearts and eyes were dazed with wine,
And all became bemused, returning home
While tedious night was traversing the dome.

§ 14

How Káús and Rustam led forth the Host

When Sol had pierced night's pitch-hued cloak and come
V. 473 Forth from the veil Káús bade Gív and Tús
To bind the drums upon the elephants.
He oped the treasury-door, gave out supplies,
Then called to horse and loaded up the baggage.
A hundred thousand cavaliers in mail
Went into camp, and as the army marched
Heaven darkened with the chargers' dust. The tents
And tent-enclosures stretched two miles, and earth
Was clad with elephants and horses' shoes;
The sky grew dark as indigo, earth turned
To ebony, the drum-roll shook the plain.
The army marched, the sun's bright visage gloomed,
And double-pointed javelin and dart
Flashed like a flame through dust as through a veil.
What with the spears and flags of divers fashion,
The golden bucklers and the golden boots,
Thou wouldst have said: "There came an ebon cloud
Which showered sandarac." The world discerned not
Between the night and day, and thou hadst said
That neither sky nor Pleiades existed.
Thus marched the army, hiding soil and rock,
Until it neared the portal of the stronghold.
An outcry from the lookout warned Suhráb:—
"A host hath come." He mounted to the walls
To view it and then showed it to Húmán,
Who, when he saw so great a multitude
Approaching, was afraid and held his breath.
Suhráb the hero said: "Relieve thy heart
Of care, thou wilt not see in this vast host
A single warrior or massive mace

Meet me upon the field though sun and moon
Be on their side. The men and arms abound,
Yet know I nothing of the leaders' names!
Now by the fortune of Afrásiyáb V. 474
Will I make all the desert like a sea."
Descending, light of heart and unconcerned,
He joined the revels of the revellers,
And recked not of the war.
The Íránians
Set up the camp-enclosure of the Sháh
Before the castle on the open plain;
Men, tentage, and enclosures covered hill
And wilderness till naught was left to fill.

§ 15

How Rustam slew Zhanda Razm

At sunset, when night's skirt trailed o'er the day,
Came Rustam girded and intent on war
Before the Sháh, and said: "Let me go forth
Without my belt and helmet. I will mark
Who this new worldlord is, who are the chiefs,
And who is in command."
Káús replied:—
"The very work for thee, and mayst thou prosper
Both soul and body. God watch o'er thee ever,
And o'er thy heart's desire and loyal purpose."
Assuming Turkman garb he reached by stealth
The hold and heard the Turkmans' shouts and clamour.
The gallant hero made his way inside,
As 'twere a lion after antelopes,
And saw and marked the chieftains one and all,
Joy mantling in his visage like a rose.
Now when Suhráb was going to the wars
His mother summoned to her Zhanda Razm, V. 475

For once he had seen Rustam at a feast.
His father was the king of Samangán,
His nephew glorious Suhráb. She said:—
"O ardent warrior! be this youth's comrade
That when the hero cometh to Írán
And meeteth with the monarch of the brave,
And when the hosts encounter in the fight,
Thou mayest show my darling son his father."
Now as Suhráb appeared to Rustam's eyes
Enthroned amid the feast with Zhanda Razm
On one hand, with the valiant cavalier
Húmán and that illustrious Lion Bármán
Upon the other, thou hadst said that he
Filled all the throne and seemed a verdant cypress.
His arms were like a camel's thighs, his breast
Was like a lion's and his visage ruddy.
A hundred valiant warriors sat round,
All young, illustrious, and lion-like,
While fifty slaves with bracelets on their arms
Before the heart-delighting lofty throne
Invoked by turns a blessing on his mien,
His stature, sword, and signet-ring. As Rustam
Crouched at a distance watching, Zhanda Razm
Went out for some occasion that he had,
Perceived a warrior like a lofty cypress,
To whom there was no peer among the troops,
And seizing on him roughly questioned him
With sharpness, saying: "Who art thou? Speak out!
Come to the light and let me see thy face."
A sudden buffet from the fist of Rustam
Fell on his neck; he yielded up the ghost.
There Zhanda Razm lay—a corpse; for him
The day of fighting and of feast was over.
Suhráb continued long in expectation,
But Zhanda Razm the Lion came not back.
At length the youth began to ask for him

Because his room was empty. Some went out,
Beheld him vilely overthrown, at peace V. 476
From banquet and from battle, and returned
With clamour, and with sorrow in their hearts.
They told Suhráb that Zhanda Razm was dead.
The youth sprang up and went to him like smoke,
Accompanied by servants, lights, and minstrels,
Beheld him lying dead and stood astound,
Then called his gallant warriors and said:—
"Ye men of wisdom and ye valiant chiefs!
Ye must not rest to-night but whet your spears,
Because a wolf hath come among the flock
And found the dogs and shepherds off their guard.
Among the mighty he hath seized one ram
And cast him thus in scorn, but with God's help,
When my bay trampleth earth, I will unstrap
My lasso in revenge for Zhanda Razm."
He took his seat again and called the nobles.
"Though Zhanda Razm's place beside my throne
Is void," he said, "I have not done with feasting."
As Rustam was returning to the Sháh,
Gív, who was outpost-guard, saw him approach,
Drew, roared out like a maddened elephant,
And with his shield above his head showed fight;
But Rustam knowing who the outpost was
Laughed and returned the shout, whereat the guard, V. 477
Who knew his voice, advanced afoot and said:—
"Where hast thou been afoot and in the dark,
Thou battle-loving chieftain?"
Rustam told
His enterprise and what a lion-man
He had destroyed, while Gív applauded, saying:—
"May charger, mace, and saddle ne'er lack thee."
Then Rustam going to the Sháh informed him
About the Turkmans and their banqueting,
About Suhráb, his stature and his mien,

His arms and shoulders, chest and feet, and said:—
"This is no Turkman born; he is as tall
And upright as a cypress, with no peer
In either land; in short 'tis Sám himself."
Then of the blow on Zhanda Razm's neck
He said: "He came not back to feast or fight."
They talked and after called for harp and wine,
But all the night the troops were ranked in line.

§ 16

How Suhráb asked Hajír the Names of the Chiefs of Írán

Now when the sun held up its golden shield
Fate also raised its head upon the sky.
Suhráb put on his battle-mail and mounted
Upon a charger dark as indigo.
An Indian sword was slung across his breast,
And on his head he wore a royal helmet,
While from his saddle-straps his lasso hung
In sixty coils. His face was stern. He came
And choosing out an eminence surveyed
The army of Írán, bade call Hajír,
And said to him: "An arrow should be straight.
V. 478 In every matter act with honesty
If thou wouldst 'scape mishap. Now answer truly,
Pervert not counsel nor prevaricate.
Wouldst thou be free and well esteemed by others?
Then tell me what I ask about Írán,
And swerve no tittle from the path of truth.
I will bestow on thee abundant treasure,
But if thou liest bonds and pit are thine."
Hajír replied: "Whate'er the prince shall ask
I will reply according to my knowledge.
Why should I speak to thee deceitfully?
Thou shalt be witness to mine honest dealing:

I will not even think a guileful thought.
The best trade in the world is honesty,
The worst thought guile."
Suhráb said: "I shall ask
At large about the chiefs, the Sháh, the folk,
And all the great men of the land as Gív,
Tús, and Gúdarz. Whatever I shall ask
About Bahrám, famed Rustam, and the rest,
Make answer to me as I question thee.
Yon many-hued enclosure of brocade
Encircling tents of leopard-skin; before it
A hundred mighty elephants are tethered;
There is a turquoise throne blue as the Nile,
A flag charged with a yellow sun, the staff
Crowned with a golden moon, the case of purple.
Who is the man thus stationed in the centre?"
Hajír replied: "The Sháh, and at his gate V. 479
Are elephants and lions."
"On the right,"
Suhráb said, "there are many cavaliers
With elephants and baggage. The enclosure
Is black, and round it troops are standing ranked
With tents past count; before it there are lions,
Behind it elephants, while in the front
There is a flag charged with an elephant,
And cavaliers in golden boots stand by."
Hajír replied: "'Tis Tús son of Naudar:
His standard hath an elephant-device."
Suhráb went on: "That red enclosure there,
Where many cavaliers are standing round,
The standard purple, the device a lion,
And in the centre there are sparkling jewels.
Behind it is a multitude of troops,
Who all bear lances and are clad in mail.
Who is he? Let me know the chieftain's name,
And bring not ruin on thyself by guile."

He answered: "That belongeth to Gúdarz—
The glory of the Free—son of Kishwád,
A valiant general in war. He hath
Twice forty sons, all Elephants and Lions.
No elephant, no tiger of the plain,
No mountain-pard, would strive with him in fight."
Suhráb went on: "As to yon green enclosure
In front whereof are stationed many troops,
While in the midst a splendid throne is set
With Káwa's flag before it. On the throne
A paladin is seated, one that hath
The Grace, the neck, and shoulders of a hero,
And seated thus is higher by a head
Than any of the people standing near.
V. 480 Before him is a charger just his match
In height; a lasso droopeth to its hoofs.
Whene'er the charger snorteth thou wouldst say:—
'It is the raging sea!' In front of him
Are many elephants in mail, and he
Is restless. I behold not in Írán
One of his height or such another charger.
There is a dragon, look! upon his standard,
And on the staff-top is a golden lion."
Hajír thought: "If I tell this lion-man
The bearings of the elephantine hero,
Forthwith he will send up the dust from Rustam.
'Tis best to keep him dark and name him not."
He answered: "An ally of ours from Chín
Hath lately joined the Sháh."
Suhráb inquired
His name. Hajír replied: "I know it not,
For I was in this castle at the time."
Suhráb was grieved to find no trace of Rustam,
And though his mother had described the bearings
He would not credit his own eyes. Again
He pressed Hajír to tell and soothe his heart,

But o'er his head was written otherwise—
A sentence never minished or enhanced.
Suhráb next asked him: "Who among the chiefs V. 481
Pitched that enclosure which is most apart,
Where many cavaliers and elephants
Are standing and the clarions are sounding?
Above it is a flag charged with a wolf;
The golden staff-head reacheth to the clouds;
Within there is a throne with slaves before it."
He answered: "That is Gív son of Gúdarz,
He whom the chieftains call 'the gallant Gív,'
The best and greatest of the family,
And captain o'er the more part of the host.
He is the noble son-in-law of Rustam,
And equalled but by few within Írán."
Suhráb continued: "Where the shining sun
Is rising I perceive a white enclosure
All of brocade of Rúman make. Before it
More than a thousand cavaliers are ranged;
The footmen armed with double-headed spears
And bucklers there make up a boundless host.
Their leader sitteth on an ivory throne
Upon a seat of teak. The tent-enclosure
Is of brocade, and many slaves stand ranked."
Hajír replied: "'Tis youthful Faríburz,
Son of the Sháh and crown of warriors."
Suhráb said: "It is fitting, since he is
The Sháh's son and possessor of a crown."
He asked: "Whose is that yellow tent-enclosure
In front whereof a banner fluttereth
With others yellow, red, and violet round it?
The charge upon the hindmost is a boar,
And on the lofty staff a silvern moon."
"His name," Hajír made answer, "is Guráza, V. 482
Who draweth not the rein in fights with lions—
A prudent man descended from Gívgán,

Who never murmureth at pain or hardship."
Suhráb thus sought for traces of his father:
Hajír was reticent and hid the truth.
The Almighty hath disposed the world. Wilt thou
Dispose it? Hath He ceased to superintend?
A fate not of thy choice is written now,
And what He causeth will be in the end.
If thou affectionest this Wayside Inn
'Twill yield thee poison, travail, and chagrin.
The noble hero asked Hajír again
About that one whom he so longed to see,
About that green enclosure and tall steed,
About that warrior and the twisted lasso.
At last Hajír said: "I must keep back naught.
If I tell not the name of him of Chín
It is because I know it not myself."
Suhráb replied: "Thou doest much amiss,
Thou hast not mentioned Rustam, and that chief
Of paladins would show amid the host.
Thou saidst: 'He is the champion, he that guardeth
All provinces and marches.' When Káús
Is warring, with a mighty elephant
To bear his crown and throne, the paladin
Should lead his van what time the war-cry riseth."
Hajír replied: "The lion-taking hero
Must be at present in Zábulistán,
For 'tis the time to feast among the roses."
Suhráb rejoined: "Now answer this—the Sháh
Is bent on war and, while helmed chieftains gather
To give him aid, the paladin in chief
Is merry-making! Young and old would laugh
At such a tale. We made a pact to-day,
And though I love not words I will repeat it:—
V. 483 If thou wilt point me out the paladin
Thy head shall be exalted everywhere;
I will unlock the secret treasuries

And leave thee not a want, but if thou keepest
This secret from me, making mystery
Where there is none, I will cut off thy head.
Consider now which course thou wilt adopt.
Know'st not the saying of the archimage
When speaking of some matter to the king?
'A word spoken is a jewel still
Uncut, still kept in bonds; but, once set free
From bondage and disablement, may fill
The bezel—priceless, glittering brilliantly.'"
Hajír responded: "When my lord the prince
Is weary of his signet, crown, and state,
Then let him seek a warrior in the world
Who overthroweth mighty elephants,
And with his anvil-breaking mace-head robbeth
Two hundred of existence at a blow;
For Rustam when opposed to any one
Will bring his head down from the sky to dust.
No elephant on earth is match for him,
His steed's dust is more black than indigo,
His body hath a hundred strong men's strength,
His head is taller than a lofty tree,
And when he rageth on the day of battle
What is a lion, elephant, or man
Within his grasp?"

High-born Suhráb replied:— V. 484
"Gúdarz son of Kishwád hath evil luck
In that for all his puissance, wit, and prowess
He hath to call thee son. Where hast thou looked
On men of war or heard their chargers' tramp
That thou describest Rustam in such terms
And utterest his praise continually?
Thou fearest fire because the stream is calm,
But when it is in flood the fuming fire
Will soon be quenched, and when the sun shall draw
Its blazing sword night's head will go to sleep."

Hajír unwitting thought: "If I declare
The lion-taker's bearings and inform
This Turkman with such hand and neck and seat,
He will arouse his warriors to fight
And urge along his elephantine steed.
He hath such strength and such a neck and shoulder
That Rustam will be slaughtered in his grasp.
Not one of all our warriors will come
To meet him face to face, and he will seize
The throne of Sháh Káús. An archmage said:—
'It is a better thing with fame to go
From life than live and gratify the foe.'
If it be mine to perish by his hand
Day will not darken nor stream turn to blood.
Three score and sixteen sons—all lion-men—
Hath old Gúdarz beside myself, as Gív,
Who conquereth worlds and breaketh hosts, and is
In every place the leader of the folk,
Bahrám, Ruhhám the exalted, and Shídúsh
The lion-slaying warrior, and they all
Will show me kindness after I am dead,
And in revenge will slay our enemies;
V. 485 But when Gúdarz and all his seventy sons
Beloved—illustrious men and warriors—
Cease from Írán let me too be no more.
I mind a holy archimage's words:—
'When cypress-roots appear the pheasant well
May hesitate at common grass to smell.'"
Then said he to Suhráb: "Why so much heat?
Thy questioning to me is all of Rustam.
Why must thou pick a quarrel with me thus
By asking foolish questions? Just because
I cannot give thee an account of him
Wilt thou behead me? Thou need'st no excuse
For shedding blood; show thy true colours then.
Thou wilt not crush the elephantine chief,

Or get him easily within thy clutches.
Refrain from seeking him in fight, for he
Will surely make the dust fly out of thee."

§ 17

How Suhráb attacked the Army of Káús

Suhráb the chief of warriors, when he heard
These harsh words, turned his back upon Hajír,
And hid his face without reply, astounded
At that dark utterance; then from saddleback
He fiercely struck Hajír a blow back-handed,
Felled him, and went his way, mused much and long,
And made his preparations for the fight.
He girt him with the girdle of revenge,
Took from his princely head the golden crown,
Put on his mail and breastplate joyfully,
And set a Rúman helmet on his head.
That paladin, that binder of the Dív,
Took spear, bow, lasso, and his massive mace,
The blood was boiling in his veins with ardour.
He mounted on his rapid steed, sent up
The battle-cry, and spear in hand rushed out V. 486
Like some mad elephant upon the field.
He came forth bent on fight, he made the dust-clouds
Fly to the moon, then charged the Sháh's enclosure
And made it totter with his spear, while all
The valiant chieftains fled like onagers
Before a lion's claws; not one had courage
To face such foot and stirrup, hand and rein,
Such arm and flashing spear. They met and said:
"Here is an elephantine hero for you—
One that we cannot look on unappalled!
Who is there bold enough to challenge him?"

Anon Suhráb the warrior raised his voice,
Assailing Sháh Káús with scornful words,
And thus he said: "O monarch of the Free!
What business hast thou on the battlefield?
Why dost thou bear the name of Kai Káús
Who canst not stand where Lions fight together?
I wield my spear and all thy troops are cowed.
Upon the night that Zhanda Razm was slain
I swore a mighty oath while at the feast:—
'I will not leave a spearman of Írán,
And I will hang Káús upon the gibbet
Alive.' What mighty man hast thou to meet me?"
V. 487 He spake and waited long in silence. None
Made answer from Írán. Then bending down
He forced out seventy tent-pegs with his spear,
The tent-enclosure tumbled to the ground,
And everywhere the blast of clarions sounded.
Sháh Kai Káús exclaimed in his dismay:—
"O men of noble name and glorious race!
Let some one take the news to Rustam, saying:—
'Our warriors' wits are ousted by this Turkman.
I have no cavalier to fight with him;
None of Írán is bold enough to go.'"
Tús bore the message and told Rustam all,
Who thus made answer: "Every other Sháh,
That called me suddenly, called me at times
To feast, at times to fight, but with Káús
I ne'er see aught excepting fight and travail!"
Then gazing from his tent he found that Gív,
Who had but just arrived, was saddling Rakhsh,
And that Gurgín was crying: "Quick! Make haste!"
Ruhhám was fastening the girth and mace,
And Tús had got in hand the horse's mail.
Each one was crying to another: "Quick!"
The matchless hero heard it from his tent
And thought: "This must be Áhriman's own fight!

So great a hubbub is not made for one."
He put on his cuirass of tiger-skin,
Then girt a royal girdle round his loins,
And mounting Rakhsh set forth. He left Zawára
In charge of throne and troops, enjoining him :—
" Advance not and take no commands save mine."
They bore his standard with him as he went
Intent on fight and angry. When he saw
The limbs and shoulders of Suhráb, his breast
As broad as that of valiant Sám, he said :—
" Go we aside to some fit spot for battle." V. 488
Suhráb began to rub his hands, he turned
Back from the Íránian lines, and said to Rustam :—
" Come then; we mighty men require no help;
The fight between us will suffice, and yet
The field of battle is no place for thee;
Thou canst not bear one buffet from my fist.
Great stature hast thou, mighty limbs and neck,
But they are weak with age."
Then Rustam, gazing
Upon that haughty one with such long stirrups,
And such a hand and shoulder, answered mildly :—
" Fair youth! the earth is hard and cold, the air
Is soft and warm. Old am I, but have seen
Full many a stricken field, and many a dív
Hath perished by my hand, yet saw I never
Myself o'ercome. Wait till we fight together;
If thou survivest fear no crocodile.
Both seas and mountains have beheld how I
Have striven with the famed chiefs of Túrán
In fight: the stars bear witness to my deeds.
My might hath laid the world beneath my feet,
And now my heart doth yearn in ruth for thee;
I would not take thy life. Thou wilt not leave
Behind a Turkman with such neck and shoulders.
I know no peer to thee e'en in Írán."

When Rustam spake Suhráb's heart throbbed. He answered:—

"One question will I put. Vouchsafe to tell me
V. 489 The truth. Inform me of thy parentage,
And make me happy by thy fair reply.
I think that thou art Rustam, that thou art
Sprung from the noble race of Narímán."

The other answered him: "I am not Rustam,
Not sprung from Sám the son of Narímán,
For Rustam is a paladin, while I
Am mean, not having throne and state and crown."

Suhráb despaired, he had had hope before,
The face of day was bright to him no more.

§ 18

How Rustam fought with Suhráb

Suhráb, still musing on his mother's words,
Went spear in hand. They chose a battle-ground
Where room was scant, and fought with javelins
Till points and whipping broke; next, wheeling leftward,
Closed with their Indian scimitars and showered
Sparks from their blades, which shivered 'neath such strokes
As might have heralded the Day of Doom;
Then took their massive maces and fought on
Until their weapons bent beneath the blows.
The chargers staggered and their bards dropped off;
The riders raged beneath their shivered mail;
Both were fordone and hand and arm both failed.
With bodies running sweat, with mouths dust-choked,
And tongues thirst-cracked, at length the champions parted,
The sire in anguish and the son exhausted.

O world! thy doings are a mystery,
The broken and the whole both come from thee!
Love stirred in neither of these twain, no trace
Of wisdom was there, love showed not its face!
The fish in streams, wild asses on the plain,
And beasts of burden know their young again,
But toil and lust forbid a man to know
The difference between a child and foe!
Then Rustam thought: "I never yet beheld V. 490
A Crocodile fight thus. Compared with this
To fight the White Dív was an easy task:
To-day my heart despaireth through a man!
The hand of one who is unpractised yet,
No warrior and not named among the chiefs,
Hath made me weary of my life in sight
Of both the hosts!"
The chargers being rested,
The youthful hero and the man in years
Strung up their bows, but still the coats of mail,
The breastplates, and the tiger-skin cuirass
Received no injury from the arrow-points,
And then each hero, raging at his foe,
Seized on the other by the leathern belt.
Now Rustam, had he clutched a rock in battle,
E'en the Black Stone itself,[1] had torn it out,
But when he seized the belt and would unhorse
Suhráb, the young man's waist felt not the tug,
And Rustam's hand was foiled. He quitted hold,
He marvelled at the prowess of his foe,
And then these lion-quellers, satiate
With battle, bruised, and wounded drew apart.
Suhráb again took from his saddle-bow
The massive mace, and gripping with his legs
Smote Rustam grievously upon the shoulder,
Who though he winced yet bravely bare the pain.

[1] A meteorite built into the wall of the Kaaba at Mecca.

Suhráb laughed out and cried: "O cavalier!
Thou canst not bear the buffets of the brave.
Thy charger, one would say, is but an ass;
As for the rider both his hands are naught.
V. 491 A warrior though cypress-tall is foolish
To play the youth when he is in his dotage."
Each humbled by the other turned away.
They parted, troubled both in heart and mind.
Like leopard sighting prey the mighty Rustam
Went to attack the army of Túrán,
While brave Suhráb assailed the Íránian host
And gave his fleet steed rein. He charged the foe
And many a warrior perished by his hand.
Wolf-like he scattered small and great. The heart
Of Rustam boded ill. "Káús will suffer,"
He thought, "from this brave Turkman just arrived
With mail-clad breast and arms."
He hasted back
To camp with anxious heart. There mid the host
He saw Suhráb—a lion mad for prey—
The ground about him tulip-hued with blood,
His spearpoint, hands, and mail all drenched with gore.
Then Rustam raging like a furious lion
Exclaimed: "Bloodthirsty Turkman! who of all
This host opposed thee? Why hast thou not kept
Thy hands for me instead of coming thus
Like wolf among a flock?"
Suhráb replied:—
"The army of Túrán is holding back
From strife, and doing nothing to provoke it,
V. 492 Yet thou began'st it by assailing them
When none sought battle and revenge on thee!"
"Light faileth," Rustam said. "On its return
A throne and gibbet wait us on this plain,
For all the bright world yieldeth to the sword,
And if thine arms are so familiar

With scimitar and arrow never die!
Come we with vengeful swords at break of day
To learn the Maker's will, but now away!"

§ 19

How Rustam and Suhráb returned to Camp

They parted and the air's face gloomed. Suhráb
Amazed the circling sphere. Thou wouldst have said:—
"Heaven fashioned him of war; he ceaseth not
A moment from the fray; his form is brazen,
His charger iron, and his spirit wondrous."
Suhráb when night fell joined his troops. His loins
Were galled with battle but his breast was iron.
Thus spake he to Húmán: "This day the sun
Arose and filled the world with war and strife.
How fared ye with this gallant cavalier
Who hath a hero's heart and lion's claws?
What did he say and do? He proved my match!
How fared my troops with him? I hold him peerless,
Though old a Lion bent on war and strife."
Húmán replied: "Thou bad'st us tarry here. V. 493
Just as we had made ready for the field
A warrior came and challenged us to combat,
Confronting all this mighty armament.
Thou wouldst have said: 'He cometh fresh from wine
To venture all alone on such a struggle.'
He raised the dust of war on every side
And slaughtered many warriors of our camp,
Then turning round departed at full speed."
Suhráb said: "He hath slain no man of mark
While I have slaughtered many Íránians,
And puddled with their blood the ground to clay,
While ye looked on. However, none opposed me;
'Twas well none did, for had a lion come

He would not have escaped my massive mace.
What is a tiger, pard, or mighty lion
Confronting me who with my spearpoint bring
Fire from the clouds? When warriors behold
My visage in its wrath their mail is shivered.
To-morrow morning ere it is high day
It will be seen which is the better man,
And by the Maker's name—the only God—
I will not leave a foe alive. Now spread we
The board with meat and wine, and cheer our hearts."

When Rustam reached the host he questioned Gív:—
"What did Suhráb the daring warrior?"

V. 494 Gív answered: "We ne'er saw one fight like him.
He rode up to our centre spear in hand,
And raging; there he challenged Tús, who wolf-like
Came forth and mounted. When Suhráb beheld him
Advancing with his lance he roared as 'twere
A lion in its rage, and with bent mace
Struck Tús upon the breast a mighty blow
That made his helm fall off. Tús turned and fled.
Then many others fought but none prevailed,
For only Rustam can contend with him.
I kept the good old rule of one to one.
When no more single challengers went forth
We let him have the field all to himself,
Whereat he left the centre for the right
And flourished in his glory here and there."

Now Rustam sorrowed at the words of Gív
And went to Sháh Káús, who seated him
Upon the throne. Then Rustam told the Sháh
About Suhráb, his stature, and his mien:—
"None ever saw one of his tender years
So brave and lion-like. In height he reacheth
The stars; the earth can not support his bulk;
His arms and thighs are camel-like and larger.
With sword and shaft, with lasso and with mace,

We proved each other lustily in all ways
Until at last I said: 'Ere now have I
Plucked from the saddle many a warrior,'
And laying hold upon his leathern belt
I put the buckle to a mighty strain,
And fancied: 'I shall raise him from his saddle
And hurl him like the rest to dust.' But though
The mountain-tops were rocking in the blast V. 495
That chieftain would not rock upon his seat,
And so I quitted him, for it was late,
The night was very dark, there was no moon;
But we intend to meet again to-morrow
To wrestle. All I can I will, but know not
Which will prevail. Still we shall learn God's purpose,
For victory and conquest are from Him
Who is the Maker of the sun and moon."
Then Kai Káús replied: "God rend our foes
In pieces! I will pray to Him to-night
For victory o'er this vile, malignant Turkman,
Pray that thy withered hopes may spring afresh,
And that thy fame may reach the sun."
Then Rustam:—
"Thy Grace will speed thy liege's whole desire."
He went depressed and vengeful to his camp.
To him Zawára came with downcast soul,
And said: "How fared the paladin to-day?"
But Rustam first would eat, then washed his heart
Of care and charged his brother, saying thus:—
"Be vigilant and cautious. When I go
At dawn to fight that Turkman warrior
Lead out mine army and bring forth my flag,
My throne, and golden boots, and be before V. 496
My tent when bright Sol riseth. If I prove
Victorious in the fight I shall not loiter
Upon the battlefield, while if the matter
Have other ending make no lamentation

And be not downcast. Let not any of you
Go on the field or prosecute the war,
But go hence to Zábulistán to Zál,
Console my mother for my God-sent fate,
And say to her: 'Set not thy heart upon me,
And be not always mourning for my death.
No one abideth in this world for ever,
Heaven had no pretext left to spare me longer.
I have slain lions, pards, dívs, crocodiles
Enough, and razed full many a wall and stronghold,
While no man had the upper hand of me,
Though he that mounteth on his steed and chargeth
Is simply knocking at the door of death.
What though a man outlive a thousand years
One road and one event are for us all.
Bethink thee of Jamshíd the exalted Sháh,
And Tahmúras the Binder of the Dív.
There was no monarch like them here below,
And yet at last God took them. As the earth
Remained not theirs I too must pass away.'
When she hath been consoled thus say to Zál:—
'Abandon not the monarch of the world,
Fight for him valiantly and do his bidding.
V. 497 We all, both young and old, are doomed to die;
No one abideth in this world for ever.'"
They rested after half the night had gone
In talk about Suhráb and him alone.

§ 20

How Suhráb overthrew Rustam

The bright sun shone, the raven night flew low,
Great Rustam donned his tiger-skin cuirass
And mounted on his fiery dragon-steed.
Two leagues divided host from host, and all
Stood ready-armed. The hero with a casque

Of iron on his head came on the field.
Suhráb on his side revelling with comrades
Had thus addressed Húmán: "That lion-man,
Who striveth with me, is as tall as I am
And hath a dauntless heart. He favoureth me
In shoulder, breast, and arm, and thou wouldst say
That some skilled workman laid us out by line.
His very feet and stirrups move my love
And make me blush, for I perceive in him
The marks whereof my mother spake. Moreover
My heart presageth that he must be Rustam,
For few resemble him. I may not challenge
My sire or lightly meet him in the combat."
Húmán said: "Rustam oft hath countered me: V. 498
This charger is like his, except in action."
At sunrise, when they woke, Suhráb arrayed
Himself in mail and mirthful though resolved
Set forward shouting, ox-head mace in hand.
He greeted Rustam smiling, thou hadst said
That they had passed the night in company:—
"How went the night? How is't with thee to-day?
Why so intent on strife? Fling down thine arrows
And scimitar, and drop the hand of wrong.
Let us dismount and, sitting, clear our faces
With wine, and, leaguing in God's sight, repent
Our former strife. Until some other cometh
To battle feast with me because I love thee,
And weep for shamefastness. In sooth thou comest
From heroes and wilt tell me of thy stock,
For as my foe thou shouldst not hide thy name.
Art thou the famous Rustam of Zábul,
The son of valiant Zál the son of Sám?"
Then Rustam: "Young aspirant! heretofore
We talked not thus but spake last night of wrestling.
I am not to be gulled, attempt it not.
Though thou art young I am no child myself, V. 499

But girt to wrestle, and the end shall be
According to the will of Providence.
I have known ups and downs, and am not one
To practise guile upon."
Suhráb replied:—
"Old man! if thou rejectest my proposals . . .!
I wished that thou shouldst die upon thy bed,
And that thy kin should tomb thy soulless corpse,
But I will end thee if it be God's will."
They lighted, tied their chargers to a rock,
And cautiously advanced in mail and casque
With troubled hearts. They wrestled like two lions
Until their bodies ran with sweat and blood.
From sunrise till the shadows grew they strove
Until Suhráb, that maddened Elephant,
Reached out, up-leaping with a lion's spring,
Caught Rustam's girdle, tugged amain as though,
Thou wouldst have said, to rend the earth, and shouting
With rage and vengeance hurled him to the ground,
Raised him aloft and, having dashed him down,
Sat on his breast with visage, hand, and mouth
Besmirched with dust, as when a lion felleth
An onager, then drew a bright steel dagger
V. 500 To cut off Rustam's head, who seeing this
Exclaimed: "Explain I must! O warrior
That takest Lions captive and art skilled
With lasso, mace, and scimitar! the customs
And laws of arms with us are not as yours.
In wrestling none may take a foeman's head
The first time that his back is on the ground,
But having thrown him twice and won the name
Of Lion then he may behead the foe:
Such is our custom."
Thus he sought to 'scape
The Dragon's clutches and get off with life.
The brave youth hearkened to the old man's words.

In part through confidence, in part through fate,
In part no doubt through magnanimity,
Suhráb let Rustam go, turned toward the plain,
Pursued an antelope that crossed his path,
And utterly forgot his recent foe.
When he was far away Húmán came up
As swift as dust and asked about the fight.
He told Húmán what had been said and done,
Who cried: "Alas! young man! art thou indeed
So weary of thy life? Woe for thy breast,
Mien, stature, stirrups, and heroic feet!
The mighty Lion whom thou hadst ensnared
Thou hast let go and all is still to do.
Mark how he will entreat thee on the day
Of battle owing to thy senseless act.
A king[1] once spake a proverb to the point:—
'Despise not any foe however weak.'"
He took the very life out of Suhráb,
Who standing sorrowing and amazed replied:—
"Let us dismiss such fancies from our hearts,
For he will come to fight with me to-morrow, V. 501
And thou shalt see a yoke upon his neck."
He went to camp in dudgeon at his deed.
When Rustam had escaped his foeman's clutch
He was again as 'twere a mount of steel.
He went toward a rivulet as one
Who having fainted is himself again.
He drank and bathed, then prayed to God for strength
And victory, not knowing what the sun
And moon decreed, or how the turning sky
Would rob him of the Crown upon his head.
The tale is told that Rustam had at first
Such strength bestowed by Him who giveth all
That if he walked upon a rock his feet
Would sink therein. Such puissance as that

[1] Zahhák. See vol. i. p. 154.

Proved an abiding trouble, and he prayed
To God in bitterness of soul to minish
His strength that he might walk like other men.
According to his prayer his mountain-strength
Had shrunk, but face to face with such a task,
And pierced by apprehension of Suhráb,
He cried to God and said: "Almighty Lord!
Protect Thy slave in his extremity.
O holy Fosterer! I ask again
My former strength."
God granted him his prayer,
The strength which once had waned now waxed in him.
He went back to the field perturbed and pale
While, like a maddened elephant, Suhráb,
With lasso on his arm and bow in hand,
V. 502 Came in his pride and roaring like a lion,
His plunging charger flinging up the soil.
When Rustam saw the bearing of his foe
He was astound and gazing earnestly
Weighed in his mind the chances of the fight.
Suhráb, puffed up with youthful arrogance,
On seeing Rustam in his strength and Grace,
Cried: "Thou that didst escape the Lion's claws!
Why com'st thou boldly to confront me? Speak!
Hast thou no interests of thine own to seek?"

§ 21

How Suhráb was slain by Rustam

They tied their steeds while fate malignantly
Revolved o'erhead, and when dark fate is wroth
Flint rocks become like wax. The two began
To wrestle, holding by their leathern belts.
As for Suhráb thou wouldst have said: "High heaven
Hath hampered him," while Rustam reaching clutched
That warrior-leopard by the head and neck,

Bent down the body of the gallant youth,
Whose time was come and all whose strength was gone,
And like a lion dashed him to the ground; V. 503
Then, knowing that Suhráb would not stay under,
Drew lightly from his waist his trenchant sword
And gashed the bosom of his gallant son.
Whenever thou dost thirst for blood and stain
Therewith thy glittering dagger, destiny
Will be athirst for thy blood, and ordain
Each hair of thine to be a sword for thee.
Suhráb cried: "Ah!" and writhed. Naught recked he then
Of good or ill. "I am alone to blame,"
He said to Rustam. "Fate gave thee my key.
This hump-backed sky reared me to slay me soon.
Men of my years will mock me since my neck
Hath thus come down to dust. My mother told me
How I should recognise my father. I
Sought him in love and die of my desire.
Alas! my toils are vain, I have not seen him.
Now wert thou fish, or wrapped like night in gloom,
Or quit of earth wast soaring like a star,
My father would avenge me when he seeth
My pillow bricks. Some chief will say to Rustam:—
'Suhráb was slain and flung aside in scorn
While seeking thee.'"
Then Rustam grew distraught,
The world turned black, his body failed; o'ercome
He sank upon the ground and swooned away;
Till coming to himself he cried in anguish:—
"Where is the proof that thou art Rustam's son?
May his name perish from among the great,
For I am Rustam! Be my name forgotten,
And may the son of Sám sit mourning me!"
He raved, his blood seethed, and with groans he plucked V. 504

His hair up by the roots, while at the sight
Suhráb sank swooning till at length he cried :—
"If thou indeed art Rustam thou hast slain me
In wanton malice, for I made advances,
But naught that I could do would stir thy love.
Undo my breastplate, view my body bare,
Behold thy jewel, see how sires treat sons!
The drums beat at my gate, my mother came
With blood-stained cheeks and stricken to the soul
Because I went. She bound this on mine arm
And said : 'Preserve this keepsake of thy father's
And mark its virtue.' It is mighty now,
Now when the strife is over and the son
Is nothing to his sire."
When Rustam loosed
The mail and saw the gem he rent his clothes,
And cried : "Oh! my brave son, approved by all
And slain by me!"
With dust upon his head
And streaming face he rent his locks until
His blood ran down.
"Nay, this is worse and worse,"
Suhráb said. "Wherefore weep? What will it profit
To slay thyself? What was to be hath been."
When day declined and Rustam came not back
There went forth twenty trusty warriors
To learn the issue. Both the steeds were standing
Bemoiled with dust, but Rustam was not there.
The nobles, thinking that he had been slain,
Went to Káús in consternation saying :—
"The throne of majesty is void of Rustam!"
V. 505 A cry went up throughout the host and all
Was in confusion. Then Káús bade sound
The drums and trumpets, Tús came, and the Sháh
Said to the troops : "Dispatch a messenger
That he may find out what Suhráb hath done,

And if there must be mourning through Írán.
None will confront him with brave Rustam dead.
We must attack in force and speedily."
While clamour raged Suhráb said thus to Rustam:—
"The Turkmans' case is altered since my day
Is done. Use all thine influence that the Sháh
May not attack them. They approached Írán
Through trust in me, and I encouraged them.
How could I tell, O famous paladin!
That I should perish by my father's hand?
Let them depart unscathed, and treat them kindly.
I had a warrior in yonder hold
Caught by my lasso. Him I often asked
To point thee out: mine eyes looked ever for thee.
He told me all but this. His place is void.[1]
His words o'er-cast my day, and I despaired.
See who he is and let him not be harmed.
I marked in thee the tokens that my mother V. 506
Described but trusted not mine eyes. The stars
Decreed that I should perish by thy hand.
I came like lightning and like wind I go.
In heaven I may look on thee with joy."
Then Rustam choked, his heart was full of fire,
His eyes of tears. He mounted quick as dust
And came with lamentations to the host
In grievous consternation at his deed.
The Íránians catching sight of him fell prostrate
And gave God praise that Rustam had returned,
But when they saw the dust upon his dead,
His clothes and bosom rent, they questioned him:
"What meaneth this? For whom art thou thus troubled?"
He told the fearful deed, and all began
To mourn aloud with him. His anguish grew.
He told the nobles: "I have lost to-day

[1] "La place *que je lui avais destinée* reste vide."—MOHL.

All strength and courage. Fight not with Túrán:
I have done harm enough."
Zawára came
With breast and raiment rent and body wounded,
Whom Rustam told about his slaughtered son,
And added: "I repent me of my deed,
And have unmeasured retribution. I
Have slain my son now when my head is grey.
He is cut off both root and stem, his loins
Are pierced, and heaven will weep for him for ever."
He sent and told Húmán: "The scimitar
V. 507 Of war is sheathed and thou commandest now.
Watch o'er thy host. This is no day for fight
Or further words with thee because through malice
Thou didst not speak but sear my life and eyes."
Then to Zawára said the paladin:—
"Escort Húmán, brave hero! to the river,
Eschewing every act of violence."
Zawára went forthwith and gave the message,
And he—the warrior that taught Suhráb
The art of war—thus answered: "'Twas Hajír,
That evil-purposed stirrer up of strife,
Who hid the matter of your general,
And when Suhráb sought token of his sire
Spake not but left his mind in ignorance.
The black behaviour of Hajír hath brought
This ill on us. His head should be struck off."
Zawára came back to inform the hero
About Húmán, the host, of what Hajír,
The evil and malevolent, had done,
And how Suhráb had perished by his means.
The hero was distracted at the words,
The world grew dark before his eyes, he quitted
The battlefield and coming to Hajír
Laid hold upon his throat and threw him down,
Then drawing forth a dagger of bright steel

Was minded to behead him, but the nobles
Took part with him and saved him from death's door.
Then Rustam hurried to his wounded son
With Tús, Gúdarz, and Gustaham, while all
The troops, concerned for Rustam, said to him :—
" God will provide a remedy for this,
And make thy sorrow easy."
Rustam seized
A dagger to behead himself, but weeping
Their own hearts' blood the chieftains hung on him.
Gúdarz said : " Will it help thee to send up V. 508
The world in smoke ? Though thou shalt do thyself
A hundred harms, how will it soothe thy darling ?
If there remaineth time for him on earth
He will remain ; do thou remain with him ;
But, if the youth is passing from the world,
Think ! Who abideth in the world for ever ?
We are the quarry, and death hunteth us
No matter whether we wear casque or crown,
But all are borne out when their end hath come,
And afterward we wot not how they do.
Our tears are needed on our own account.
Who is there, chieftain ! free from dread of Death ?
However long or short the way may be
We scatter when he joineth company."

§ 22

How Rustam asked Káús for an Elixir

Then to Gúdarz said Rustam : " Famous hero
Of ardent soul ! bear for me to Káús
A message, tell him what hath chanced, and say
Thus : ' With a dagger have I pierced the reins
Of my brave son. May Rustam's life be short !
If thou at all art mindful of my deeds
Let thy heart feel for me in my distress.

Of that elixir in thy treasury,
Which hath the power to make the wounded whole,
Send somewhat graciously to me forthwith,
Together with a cup of wine. My son,
By thy good fortune, may recover yet,
And stand like me a slave before thy throne.' "
The chieftain came like wind and gave the message.
The Sháh said: "Who hath lustre in my sight
Exceeding that of elephantine Rustam?
I do not wish him ill but honour him
V. 509 Exceedingly, yet, if I send the elixir,
Suhráb—an elephantine chief—will live,
Will strengthen Rustam's back, and doubtlessly
Bring ruin on myself. If at his hands
I suffer shall I not avenge myself?
'Who is Káús,' thou heardest him once say,
'And if he be the Sháh who then is Tús?'[1]
Who in this wide world hath such neck and limbs
And Grace? How will he stand before my throne,
Or march beneath the banner of the Sháhs?
He gave me his abuse and took away
My credit with the troops. If his son liveth
A pinch of dust is all that I shall get.
Art thou of high rank and experience
And hast not heard the language of Suhráb:—
'I will behead a thousand in Írán
And hang Káús alive upon the gibbet?'[2]
If he surviveth great and small will quake.
To cherish foes is to invite contempt."
Thereat Gúdarz returned like smoke to Rustam,
And said: "The evil nature of the Sháh
Is like a colocynth in constant fruit.

[1] A kingly perversion of what Rustam really had said, suggesting that he contemplated dethroning Káús and restoring the ancient Pishdádian line in the person of its representative, Tús. See p. 143.
[2] See p. 160.

He hath no equal in the world for harshness,
And never helpeth any one in trouble.
Go unto him in person, be thy part V. 510
To bring the light to his benighted heart."

§ 23

How Rustam lamented for Suhráb

Then Rustam called for an embroidered robe
And, having laid the youth thereon, set off,
But as he went one overtook him, saying:—
"Suhráb hath passed from this wide world, and asketh
No more a palace of thee but a bier."
The father started, sighed, and groaning closed
His eyes, then lighting swift as wind removed
His helm and scattered dust upon his head,
While all the great men also wept and wailed.
He cried in mournful tones: "O warrior-youth
Exalted and a paladin by birth!
The sun and moon, the breastplate and the helm,
The crown and throne, will never see thy peer.
Hath this that hath befallen me—to slay
My son in mine old age—befallen another?
My son—the offspring of the worldlord Sám
The cavalier, born of a noble dame!
I, that have now no peer in all the world
For valour, was a boy to him! Well might
My hands be lopped! May never seat be mine
Save in the darksome dust. What shall I say V. 511
When tidings reach his mother? How shall I
Send any one to break the news to her?
What reason can I give for slaying one
Without offence and darkening his day?
What sire e'er acted thus? I well deserve
The world's abuse. Who ever slew a son
So young and wise and valiant? And his mother!

What will her sire, that honoured paladin,
Say to her in her youth and innocence?
How they will curse the progeny of Sám
And call me lacklove, impious! Who could deem
That at his years my darling would become
Tall as a cypress, set his heart on war,
Array the host, and turn my day to darkness?"
He bade them spread brocade such as kings use
Upon his young son's face—that son who set
His heart on throne and realm and only won
A narrow bier. They bore it from the field,
Then set the camp-enclosure in a blaze
While all the troops cast dust upon their heads.
They burned the tents, the many-hued brocade,
And all the goodly seats of yellow pardskin.
A cry went up and mighty Rustam wailed:—
"The world will see no cavalier like thee
For skill and valour on the day of battle.
Woe for thy valour and thy prudent mind!
Woe for those cheeks of thine, thy mien, thy stature!
Woe's me! this sorrow and heart-rending grief!
He left his mother and his father slew him!"
With royal raiment rent upon his body
And weeping blood he scrabbled in the dust
V 512 Exclaiming: "Zál and virtuous Rúdába
Will utter curses, saying: 'Rustam gained
The mastery and stabbed him to the heart.'
What plea of mine will win their hearts to me?
How will the chieftains bear to hear that I
Have rooted from the garth the straight-stemmed cypress?"
Then all the paladins of Sháh Káús
Sat by the wayside in the dust with Rustam,
And much advised him, but he heeded not.
Such are high heaven's deeds! It hath for us
A lasso in this hand, in that a crown,

And him that sitteth crowned and prosperous
It haleth with the twisted lasso down.
Why should we love this world when we and they
That fare with us alike must pass away?
Though one may reckon on long life he must
Betake him in the last resort to dust.
Now whether heaven acteth knowingly,
Or not, 'tis vain to ask its how and why;
Forbear we then to weep that one should go:
The end thereof is not for us to know.

The Sháh informed about Suhráb drew near
To Rustam with his retinue and said:—
"From Mount Alburz e'en to the reed the sky
Will bear all off. We may not set our love V. 513
Upon this dust, for, though some haste, some linger,
All die at last. Take comfort for the dead,
And hear what sages say. Though thou shouldst dash
The sky upon the earth and burn the world
'Twill not recall the dead. Know that his soul
Is long in heaven. From afar I marked
His breast, neck, stature, and his iron mace
As fate impelled him onward with his host
To perish by thy hands. What remedy?
How long wilt thou bewail the dead?"

He answered:—

"Though he is gone Húmán remaineth still
With other chieftains of Túrán and Chín.
Regard them not as foes but let Zawára,
God willing and the Sháh, conduct them hence."

Káús replied: "Aspiring chief! thy face
Is saddened through this fight, and though our foes
Have harmed me much and sent smoke from Írán,
Yet through thy sorrow is my heart so sore
That I will think upon revenge no more."

§ 24

How Rustam returned to Zábulistán

The Sháh marched homeward with the host, while Rustam
V. 514 Stayed for Zawára's news about the foe,
Then marched at dawn toward Zábulistán,
Where Zál and all the folk went out to meet him
In anguish and distress. They reached the bier.
The nobles scattered dust upon their heads,
They docked the tails of their high-crested steeds,
And rent the brazen tymbals and the drums.
When Zál the son of Sám perceived the bier
He lighted from his steed with golden trappings,
While matchless Rustam went in front afoot
With heart and raiment rent. The warriors
Put off their belts, stooped to the dust before it,
And served as bearers, bending low their heads,
Alas! for him so noble and so brave!
While Rustam in his father's presence lifted
His son's head from the golden broidery,
And cried in anguish: "See how Sám the horseman
Is sleeping sadly on this narrow bier!"
Zál showered tears of blood and plained to God,
While Rustam cried: "Chief! thou hast gone, and I
Am left in shame and wretchedness."
Then Zál:—
"A strange event! His was a massive mace.
He was of note among the mightiest,
And none will bear his like."
He spoke through tears;
His theme was all Suhráb. When Rustam reached
V. 515 His hall he wailed and had the corse set down
In front of him. Rúdába, seeing it
And Rustam's tears, exclaimed: "Alack! thou hero!

Uplift thy head one moment from the bier."
She wailed and heaving deep-drawn sighs exclaimed:—
"O paladin, son of the Lion's Whelp!
None will be born so strong and brave as thou.
Henceforth thou wilt not whisper to thy mother
Tales of thy happy moments, for in sooth
Thou hast departed to the prison-house,
Departed to the mansion of the wretched.
Oh tell not what befell thee from thy father,
And why it was that thus he pierced thy heart!"
Her cries reached Saturn; all that heard her wept.
Dust-smirched and woebegone she sought her bower
While Rustam at the sight wept tears of blood.
Thou wouldst have asked: "Hath Doomsday come, for joy
Hath fled all hearts?"
Again he brought the bier,
Whereon Suhráb the Lion lay, before
The gallant chiefs, and in his father's presence
Drew back the shroud. He showed the chiefs the corse,
And thou hadst said that heaven reeked with sorrow.
All that were present looked on helplessly,
All cheeks were livid, all robes rent, all hearts
Fulfilled with pain, all heads besmirched with dust.
The royal palace was one mighty bier,
And of that valiant Lion in his coffin
Thou wouldst have said: "Tis' Sám with his huge limbs, V. 516
And tired with warfare he hath gone to sleep."
The sire replaced the gold brocade and closed
The narrow bier. He said: "Though I shall make
His tomb of gold and fill it round with musk
'Twill perish with me, but I can no more."
While all went blind with grief he made a charnel
Shaped like a horse's hoof. The bier was formed

Of undried aloe-wood with golden clasps.
The tale of how the paladin had slain
His son went everywhere and all the world
Was full of grief, while Rustam sorrowed long,
But in the end perforce resigned himself.
The world hath many an act like this in mind,
On every soul it setteth many a brand,
For who possesseth sense and wit combined
The treachery of fortune to withstand?
The Íránians hearing burned with grief. Húmán,
For his part, went back to Túrán and told
Afrásiyáb, who was all wonderment
And speculation touching that event.

§ 25

How Suhráb's Mother received the Tidings of his Death

A cry rose from Túrán: "Suhráb hath fallen
Upon the battlefield!" The tidings reached
The king of Samangán, who rent his robes.
V. 517 The tidings reached Tahmína: "Brave Suhráb
Hath perished, stricken by his father's sword!"
She seized her robe and rent it, and her form—
That goodly gem—shone forth. She raised a cry
Of wail and woe, and swooned at whiles. She coiled
Her hair like twisted lassos round her fingers
And plucked it out. The blood ran down her face.
At times she sank fordone. She strewed dark dust
Upon her head, gnawed pieces from her arms,
Flung fire upon her head and scorched herself,
And burned her musky tresses. "Where art thou,"
She cried, "who wast thy mother's soul, but art
Now only dust and blood? I scanned the road,
I said: 'I may have tidings of Suhráb
And Rustam.' Then I mused and said: 'Already

Hast thou been round the world to find thy father,
Hast found him, and art speeding home again.'
How could I know, my son! that news would come
That he had pierced thy liver with his sword?
He had no pity for that face of thine,
Thy stature, mien, and arms, he pitied not
Thy girdlestead but clave it with his blade.
I used to nurse the body of my boy
Through days of brightness and through weary nights,
And now 'tis drowned in blood! A winding-sheet V. 518
Is all the cover of his stainless form.
Whom shall I clasp upon my bosom now?
Who is there that will rid me of my grief?
Whom shall I call upon to take thy place?
To whom impart my pain and misery?
Woe for his soul and body, eye and lustre,
That dwell in dust instead of hall and garden!
O warrior, shelter of the host! thou soughtest
Thy sire and in his place hast found thy grave.
Hope turned in thee to dolorous despair,
And now thou sleepest scorned and miserable
Amid the dust. Before he drew his dagger
And gashed thy silvern side why didst not thou
Show him the token that thy mother gave thee?
Why didst thou not declare thyself to him?
Thy mother told thee how to know thy sire:
How was it that thou didst not trust her words?
Without thee she is as the captives are—
All travail, anguish, misery, and sighing.
Why went I not with thee that wast to be
The warriors' cynosure? He would have known me
Though far away and welcomed both of us,
Cast down his sword and never pierced thy side."
This said she tore herself, plucked out her hair,
And smote her lovely visage with her palms.
She filled the eyes of all the folk with hail,

So grievous were her moans and lamentations.
At length while all hearts ached she fell a-swoon,
V. 519 Fell as one falleth dead upon the ground,
And thou hadst said: "Her blood is turned to ice."
She roused, thought of her son, and wailed afresh,
Her very heart's blood crimsoning her tears.
She fetched his crown, wept o'er it and his throne,
Exclaiming in her grief: "O royal Tree!"
She brought his wind-foot charger forth, that charger
Which he had prized so in his happy days,
And clasped and kissed its head, to folk's amazement,
And nuzzled on its hoofs, while her blood fell
And reddened all the ground. She took his robe
And clasped it to her body like her son,
She fetched his jerkin, coat of mail, and bow,
His spear, his falchion, and his massive mace.
She fetched his saddle with the reins and buckler,
And dashed her head thereon. She fetched his lasso,
And flung its eighty cubits out before her.
She fetched his helm and breastplate, and exclaimed:—
"O warrior-lion!" drew his sword and docked
His charger's mane and tail. She gave the poor
His goods—the silver, gold, and harnessed steeds.
V. 520 She locked the palace, rooted up the throne,
Then brought it down and dashed it to the ground.
She blacked the chambers' doors, sent up the dust
From porch and palace, gave to desolation
The banquet-hall that he had left for battle,
Assumed the weeds of woe all stained with blood,
By day and night lamented him with tears,
Died broken-hearted in a year, and joined
Her warrior-son.

Said eloquent Bahrám:—
"Dote not upon the dead; thy proper care
Is for thine own departure to prepare,
Since here thou canst not stay. So dally not.

Thy father once gave up his place to thee,
And thou must give up thine. Such is our lot,
And 'tis a secret still, a mystery,
Nor wilt thou with thy dazed mind find a key.
To open that closed door may no man know.
Endeavour not therefor, else wilt thou throw
Life to the winds. Our summons to depart
Is from the God and Master of us all;
Then on this Wayside Inn set not thy heart;
The profit of such sojourn is but small."

Now from this history my face I turn:
The tale of Siyáwush is my concern.

PART IV

THE STORY OF SIYÁWUSH

ARGUMENT

The poet, inspired by his theme and conscious of his genius, retells an ancient tale thus :—

Gív and Tús, while hunting, find and quarrel about a damsel. The matter is referred to the Sháh, who marries her himself. From this union springs Siyáwush, who is brought up by Rustam and afterward returns to his father's court, where Súdába, one of his father's wives, tempts him in vain and then accuses him falsely. He clears himself by ordeal and saves his accuser's own life, which had been adjudged forfeit for her wickedness. In time she is restored to favour, and Siyáwush, to escape her wiles, leads an army against Afrásiyáb, who, terrified by a dream, sues for peace. The terms granted by Siyáwush are rejected by the Sháh, and Siyáwush, his honour touched, goes over to Afrásiyáb, by whom he is well received and whose daughter Farangís he marries, having previously married Jaríra, the daughter of Pírán. He attains to great dignities, but incurs the envy of the king's brother, Garsíwaz, by whom he is done to death. His wife Farangís is protected by Pírán and gives birth to Kai Khusrau, with whose childhood the story ends.

NOTE

Firdausí, as we may gather from his prelude, thought highly of his version of this tragic story, which, unlike that of Suhráb, is not a pure episode, but leads directly, though by a long road, to the chief epic climax. It also affords a good example of the poet's treatment of his subject-matter. Various legends are combined with curious results. For instance, the legend of the birth of Siyáwush from a grand-daughter of Garsíwaz is not allowed to militate against or to modify other legends in which ancestor and descendant meet on equal terms, in the full vigour of manhood, as

strangers ignorant of their blood-relationship, as enemies, as villain and victim. Such instances are the surest guarantee that the poet is drawing on epic sources and not on his own imagination. The story further shows how needful it is for a reader of the Sháhnáma mentally to supply for himself the element of time. The account of Súdába's infatuation for Siyáwush[1] reads as if it were a matter of a few days, weeks, or months at most. It is only from a chance remark of hers that we learn that the affair had been going on for seven years!

The temptation of Siyáwush by Súdába, on which so much turns, will suggest many a parallel to the reader.

It should be mentioned, however, that Súdába's pretext for inviting Siyáwush to visit her—the suggested marriage of one of her daughters to him—was a legitimate one to a Zoroastrian.

Súdába's daughter would be Siyáwush's half-sister, and next-of-kin marriages, as they were called, were not only permitted but regarded as a sacred duty by the Magi.[2] Súdába, with the wit of a woman much in love, hit upon a perfectly legitimate motive, and Kai Káús accepted it, as we see, without the least suspicion.

Siyáwush appears as Syávarshána in the Zandavasta, where he is several times mentioned in connection with his murder by Garsíwaz and Afrásiyáb, and the vengeance exacted for it by Kai Khusrau, who, we are told, "prevailed over all; he put in bonds Frangrasyan and Keresavasda, to avenge the murder of his father Syávarshána."[3] Here, as in other cases, the leading motives of the Sháhnáma originate in the Zandavasta.

§ 49. The poet in his description of Gang-dizh perhaps had in his mind the famous stronghold of Kalát-i-Nádirí, which lies about thirty miles to the north of Mashad and not far from the poet's own birthplace, but he follows his authorities, which look at matters from a point of view west of the Caspian, and describes Gang-dizh as being beyond the sea accordingly. Tradition seems to place it in Kházarm. In the Zandavasta we read of "the castle Khshathró-saoka, that stands high up on the lofty, holy Kangha."[4] In the Díná-í Maínóg-i Khirad, a Pahlaví treatise, Siyáwush is described as the founder of Kangdez, and Kangdez itself is described as lying to the east, on the frontier of Aírán-végó.[5] In the Bundahish it is described as being in the direction of the east, "at many leagues from the bed of the wide-formed ocean towards that side."[6] Now the learned Abú Raihán Muhammad, more commonly known in the west as Albírúní, was a native of Kházarm and wrote a

[1] § 6 *seq.*
[2] WPT, ii. 389.
[3] DZA, ii. 304. See also pp. 65, 114, 115.
[4] DZA, ii. 67.
[5] WPT, iii. 64, 109.
[6] WPT, i. 119

history of that country. His account is nearly all lost, but in another work of his he tells us that the Khárazmians dated the colonisation of their country from the year 980 before Alexander, *i.e.* from the fourteenth century B.C., and that ninety-two years later the incursion of Siyáwush took place. From this time onward they were governed by monarchs of his race down to the days of king Áfrígh—a man of evil reputation—who built himself a fortress on the outskirts of the city of Khárazm, or made additions to an existing fortress, called Alfír, in the year 616 of the era of Alexander, *i.e.* toward the end of the third century A.D. This Alfír, Albírúní tells us, was built of clay and tiles, and consisted of three forts, one inside another, and all of equal height. Rising above the whole were the royal palaces. Alfír could be seen at a distance of ten miles or more. It was broken and shattered by the Oxus, and was swept away piece by piece every year, till the last remains of it had disappeared by the year 1305 of the era of Alexander, *i.e.* toward the end of the tenth century A.D.[1] It is evident from this account that Alfír was in process of construction or enlargement in the very century in which the Zandavasta was being compiled. The Khárazmians had racial affinities with the Iránians, and the epithet "holy" applied to Kangha in the Zandavasta evidently points to the fact that they were Zoroastrians as well. It may be therefore that the Khshathró-saoka of the Zandavasta, the Kangdez of the Pahlaví texts, the Alfír of Albírúní, and the Gang-dizh of the Sháhnáma all represent one and the same place—the palace-fortress of the ancient capital of Khárazm. Khárazm is, of course, the modern Khiva, and Gang-dizh means the fortress (dizh) of the land of Kangha.

§ 58 *seq.* In the account of the birth and youth of Kai Khusrau we have in essentials the same story as that told by Herodotus[2] some fifteen centuries earlier. Astyages, the king of the Medes, had a daughter Mandane. He had a dream about her which he told to Magi who were learned in such matters. Their interpretation of it alarmed him, and as the safest course in the circumstances he married his daughter to an unambitious Persian of good family named Cambyses. Soon after Astyages had another dream about Mandane. He again consulted the dream-interpreters, who told him that his daughter's son would supersede him on the throne. In consequence of this prognostic he sent for Mandane, who was dwelling among the Persians, and had her closely guarded. When her son Cyrus was born, Astyages summoned Harpagus, a member of the royal house and a most loyal liege, and ordered him to take

[1] SAC, p. 40.

[2] i. 107 *seq.*

the child from Mandane, to kill it, and to bury it. Harpagus, in great distress, carried off the child, who was ready clad in funeral weeds, to his own home, but told his wife that nothing should induce him to make away with the infant himself, for they were akin to each other. Accordingly he sent for one of the herdsmen of Astyages, whose herds were pastured on the mountains north of Ekbatana, in the direction of the Euxine—a tract frequented by wild beasts—and bade him expose the child on some desolate spot that it might soon perish. Now, it so happened that the herdsman's wife had lately had a still-born babe, and when she saw Cyrus she persuaded her husband to expose the dead and allow her to keep the living child. The son of Mandane thus grew up in the house of the herdsman, and his royal birth soon began to assert itself. His playmates chose him for their king, and he used to hold mock court among them. At length an incident brought the matter to the ears of Astyages, who questioned the herdsman and was exceedingly wroth with Harpagus. The interpreters of dreams, however, declared that no further danger was to be apprehended from Cyrus, as the dream had been sufficiently fulfilled by his election to kingship by his playfellows. Accordingly Astyages sent him back to Persia to his parents Cambyses and Mandane. Subsequently Cyrus, incited by Harpagus, rebelled and overthrew Astyages.

In the Sháhnáma we have Afrásiyáb for Astyages, Farangís for Mandane, Siyáwush for Cambyses, Khusrau for Cyrus, and Pírán for Harpagus, while, if the view be correct that the so-called empire of the Medes was in reality the empire of the Manda,[1] one important discrepancy between the Greek and Persian accounts is removed, for Astyages, Mandane, and Harpagus become Túránian instead of Median, and are thus brought into line with Afrásiyáb, Farangís, and Pírán, their representatives in the Sháhnáma.

§ 1

The Prelude

Now, O thou man of wit and eloquence! V. 523
Upon a goodly tale thy skill employ,
For if the words are equal to the sense
The poet's soul will be a source of joy;
But he whose thoughts lack loveliness will thwart

[1] Vol. i. p. 17.

His purpose by his own unlovely thought;
Moreover he will make himself a cross,
And have the disapproval of the wise;
Yet, in that every one is at a loss
To see his faults (thy genius to thine eyes
Is bright) thy work if 'tis to last, confide,
When polished, to the learnéd to decide
Its value; if approved 'twill make its way
And be as water in thine own canal.
I take from legends of a former day
A rustic minstrel's story, and I shall,
Although the tale be old, when I have done,
Make it a tale in vogue with every one.
If length of days shall be vouchsafed to me,
And with long life immunity from ill,
I shall have left behind a fruitful tree,
To go on bearing in the orchard still.
Full many a marvel hath o'erpassed his head
Whose years reach fifty-eight, yet minishéd
Greed is not ever as they onward glide;
I still by rule and omen choose my day.
V. 524 What said herein the archimage, our guide?
"He that is waxen old is old for aye."
Tell on thy tale, be wise and of good cheer,
So long as life endureth persevere.
When thou departest what was here thine own
Shall in God's hand for good or evil be;
Remember! thou shalt reap as thou hast sown
And as thou speakest men will speak of thee.
The gentle speaker heareth in return
Soft words: make speaking gently thy concern.
Now for the rustic minstrel's tale. Heed well
The matter that the poet hath to tell.

§ 2

The Story of the Mother of Siyáwush

Thus said an archimage: One morning Tús
In merry pin left the Sháh's gate at cockcrow,
With Gív, Gúdarz, and other cavaliers,
To hunt upon the desert of Daghwí
With hawk and cheetah. By a river's bank
They stalked or ran down game, and caught or shot
Enough to last them forty days. Near by
A Turkman's camp showed black, and thence a forest
Stretched almost to the marches of Túrán.
Gív led the way with Tús: behind them came
Some brave retainers. Entering the wood,
And roaming thus awhile in quest of quarry,
They saw among the trees a fair-cheeked maiden,
And hurried toward her in high glee. The age
Had not her peer in looks; hers were not charms
To need apologies. In stature she
Was cypress-tall, in looks a moon, to gaze V. 525
On her was perilous. Tús said to her:—
"Bewitching Moon! who showed thee to this wood?"
"My father set on me last night," she said,
"And so I fled from home. He had returned
Drunk from a marriage-feast and, in his frenzy
Perceiving me far off, drew forth his sword
Of watered steel and had beheaded me.
I fled for refuge, and have just come hither."
The paladin then asked her of her kindred.
She told him fully and to this effect:—
"I am akin to Garsíwaz, and trace
My lineage to Sháh Farídún."
He asked her:—
"Why camest thou afoot, for thou hast come
Unmounted and unguided?"

She replied :—
" My steed was wearied out and fell exhausted.
I had uncounted gold, gold crown, and jewels,
But over yonder hill some people robbed me
And beat me with a scabbard. I escaped
In terror and am weeping tears of blood.
My sire no doubt when sober will dispatch
Some horsemen after me forthwith, my mother
Will haste to me, she would not have me quit
These fields and fells."
Now both the paladins
Grew hot of heart for love of her, and Tús,
Lost to all shame, exclaimed : " 'Twas I who spied her,
And therefore made such haste."
But Gív replied :—
" O captain of the host ! without thy host
Thou art no match for me."
Still Tús insisted :—
" She came exactly in my horse's way."
Gív said : " Nay ! Say not so ; I led the chase.
V. 526 Tell not a falsehood for a slave-girl's sake :
A man of courage is not quarrelsome."
Their wrangle was so violent that the Moon
Was like to lose her head in the dispute,
Until a noble interposed and said :—
" Convey her to the monarch of Írán,
And bide by his decision."
Both agreed
And went to Kai Káús, who when he saw
The damsel's beauty, fell in love with her
Himself, and said to those two generals :—
" Your journey's travail was cut short for you !
Be she a doe or beautiful gazelle
A quarry such as this is for your lord.
Come let us pass the day in telling how
These warriors with their cheetahs caught a Sun ! "

He questioned her: "What is thy lineage,
For thou art fairy-like in countenance?"
"I am of high birth on my mother's side,"
She said, "my father sprang from Farídún.
My father's father is prince Garsíwaz,
Whose tents now occupy yon border land."
Káús said: "Didst thou mean to fling away
Such looks as these, such beauty and such birth?
'Tis meet I place thee in my golden bower:
Thou must be chief of all the Moon-faced there."
She answered: "I preferred thee at first sight
Among the great."
The Sháh then gave each general
Ten noble chargers with a throne and crown,
But sent the Idol to the women's bower,
And gave command to set her on the throne.
Then under her they placed an ivory seat, V. 527
Upon her head a crown of gold and turquoise,
Adorning her with yellow-hued brocade,
With jewels, turquoise, lapis lazuli,
And other presents worthy hers to be:
A ruby yet untouched by man was she.

§ 3

The Birth of Siyáwush

When nine months had elapsed, and jocund spring
Resumed its tints, men said to Kai Káús:—
"Thou hast had fruit of that auspicious Moon:
A glorious infant hath appeared, and now
Thou well mayst set thy throne above the clouds.
A babe of fairy-form is born to her,
In visage like an idol of Ázar,[1]
With face and hair unheard of heretofore,
And all the folk are talking of the child."

[1] Ázarbáiján.

The world-lord named him Siyáwush, and gave
The rolling heaven praise because of him;
Yet they that read the purpose of the sky,
Its good and evil and its when and how,
Saw that the stars were hostile to the boy,
And grieved because they saw his fortune sleeping.
They turned to God for refuge, warned the Sháh
About the fortune of his son, and showed
The path to take, aware that he would suffer
From good and bad. Anon came peerless Rustam
V. 528 Before the Sháh and said: "Mine be the task
To rear this child that is so lion-like;
Since thy retainers are not competent
There is no nurse on earth for him like me."
The monarch, having pondered much thereon,
Entrusted little loath his heart and eyes—
This atheling, the child so loved by him—
To Rustam's charge, who bore him to Zábul
And lodged him in a rosary, instructed
The youth in riding, archery, the use
Of lasso, stirrups, reins, and other gear,
To hold his court, his feasts, and drinking-bouts,
To follow game with falcon, hawk, and cheetah,
To judge in causes, and to rule the kingdom,
Make speeches, combat, and lead forth a host:
All these accomplishments did Rustam teach him,
And took abundant pains which bore their fruit,
For Siyáwush became a peerless prince,
And, as time passed, grew tall and captured lions.
One day he spake to noble Rustam thus:—
"Desire to see the Sháh hath come on me.
Much travail and heart-burning hast thou borne
To teach me all a king's accomplishments:
My father must examine the result
Of elephantine Rustam's tutelage."
The lion-hearted hero made all ready,

And sent posts everywhere. Of horses, slaves,
Gold, silver, signets, falchions, crowns, and girdles,
And various stuffs and linings, he produced
Whate'er he could himself or got elsewhere.
On this wise Rustam furnished forth the youth,
For all men's eyes were fixed on Siyáwush,
And also journeyed with him lest the Sháh
Might be offended. As their custom was
The folk put decorations everywhere V. 529
In their desire to please the paladin,
The townsmen mingled gold and ambergris,
And showered them on the travellers' heads for joy,
The world grew full of mirth and precious havings,
Each mansion's door and roof were decked, the feet
Of Rustam's Arab steeds trod drachms. Men saw
None mournful in Írán; throughout the line
Of march steeds' manes dripped saffron, musk, and wine.

§ 4

How Siyáwush arrived from Zábulistán

When news reached Sháh Káús that "Siyáwush
Is coming in great state," both Gív and Tús
Went forth right joyously at his command
With escort, trump, and drum. The chiefs assembled,
With Rustam on this hand and Tús on that,
To come in triumph to the Sháh, for they
Came with that fruiting Sapling. When he reached
The palace of the Sháh a shout was raised,
And access given. Slaves with censers charged
With goodly perfumes gazed upon the prince
With folded arms. Three hundred filled the court
To every corner, and the noble Cypress
Was in the midst. They showered gold and gems,
And called down blessings on him. Siyáwush,

When he beheld Káús upon his throne
Of ivory and crowned with brilliant rubies,
First offered praise, did reverence, and whispered
To earth awhile. He then approached the Sháh,
Who clasped him closely. Kai Káús saluted
And welcomed Rustam warmly, seated him
Upon the turquoise throne and, lost in wonder,
Called many blessings down upon his son,
V. 530 For in that height, that stature, and that Grace
The Sháh foresaw a future and much fame.
Thou wouldst have said of one so young yet wise :—
"His soul is fed on wisdom." So the Sháh,
With face upon the ground, gave many praises
To God and said: "Great Ruler of the sky,
The Lord of understanding and of love!
All good things come from Thee, but most of all
I thank Thee for my child."
The Íránian chiefs,
Each with his gift, came to the Sháh rejoicing;
They marvelled at the Grace of Siyáwush,
And called a wealth of blessings down on him.
Then by the Sháh's command the noblemen
And captains of the host attended court,
While all the world resorted to his gardens,
His palace, and his hall, with right good cheer.
Men called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
The Sháh's festivities were such as none
Had held before. A sennight passed in joy.
Upon the eighth day he unlocked his treasures,
And gave command to bring all manner forth,
As swords and signet-rings, with thrones and casques,
And Arab steeds with poplar-wooden saddles,
Bards, coats of mail for war, dínárs, and purses
Of drachms, brocade, and jewels great and small,
Except the crown, it was not time for that,
But all the rest Káús gave Siyáwush

With many promises of good to come.
Seven years' probation proved his noble birth
By all his acts, the eighth the monarch bade him
Assume a golden crown and torque and girdle,
And had a patent writ on painted silk V. 531
As royal Grace and precedent required.
Since Siyáwush was worthy of a throne,
And majesty, the Sháh bestowed on him
All Kuhistán, so called of yore, the same
As Má wara 'u'n-Nahr its modern name.

§ 5

The Death of the Mother of Siyáwush

When all was ordered as the Sháh had bidden
The prince's mother passed away. The prince
Came from his throne like one possessed, and raised
His lamentation to the rolling sky.
He rent his clothes, threw dust upon his head,
Mourned o'er her sorely, grievously afflicting
His own sweet soul, mourned greatly night and day,
For many days ne'er smiled, grieved one whole moon,
And sought no respite from his misery.
Now when the nobles heard thereof—such men
As Tús and Faríburz, Gúdarz and Gív,
Born princes or heroic paladins—
They made all haste to come to Siyáwush,
Who as he looked on them groaned grievously;
His tears burst forth afresh, and he unlocked
The portal of the anguish of his heart.
Gúdarz, when he beheld the prince's sorrow,
Gazed on that noble Cypress overwrought,
And weeping said to him: "O royal prince!
Hear mine advice and think no more of grief.
The child of every mother will depart;

Not one of them can 'scape the clutch of fate.
Although thy mother is a memory now,
Mourn not: her spirit is in heaven."
V. 532 By dint
Of many a counsel, many a soothing strain,
He made the prince's heart itself again.

§ 6

How Súdába fell in Love with Siyáwush

Time passed, the Sháh still joyed in Siyáwush,
Till as they sat one day Súdába entered,
Beheld the prince's face, and grew distraught.
Her heart throbbed, "she is wasted to a thread,"
Thou wouldst have said, "or ice before the fire."
She bade one go by stealth to him and say:—
"'Twould cause no wonder if thou shouldest visit
The royal bower anon."
The envoy went,
But noble Siyáwush was wroth and said:—
"Entice me not. I am no chamberer,
Or given to romances and intrigues."
Another day at dawn Súdába sought
The Sháh and said: "O ruler of the host!
The sun and moon have never seen thy peer,
Or any like thy son. Let all the world
Rejoice in him; so send him to thy bower
To see his sisters and thy favourites.
Tell him: 'Go visit oft thy sisters there,
Whose hearts are full, whose cheeks are wet, with yearning.'
Then will we pay him worship, give him gifts,
And bring the tree of service into fruit."
The Sháh replied: "Thou sayest right; thou hast
A hundred mothers' love for him."

He called
For Siyáwush and said: "The blood within
Our veins, and love, will show themselves; moreover
God hath so made thee that thou art beloved
Of all beholders, given thee pure birth; V. 533
None e'er was mother-born as pure as thou;
But what availeth blood-relationship
To those who see thee only from afar?
Thy sisters and Súdába, in affection
A mother to thee, are within the bower.
Go now and visit those secluded ones,
And stay awhile that they may do thee honour."

The prince beheld his father with amazement,
Then mused awhile and strove to clear himself,
Suspecting that his father sought to prove him;
For Kai Káús was knowing and smooth-tongued,
Wise, shrewd of heart, and ready to distrust.
The prince was troubled, communed with himself,
And in the end determined.
"If," he thought,
"I go Súdába will talk much with me,"
Then said: "The Sháh hath given me a patent,
A throne, and crown. From where the lofty sun
Arising maketh dust a thing of price
No king resembling thee in goodness, knowledge,
Demeanour, and pursuits, e'er donned the crown.
Point me the way to sages, men of leading,
And chiefs approved; or show me how to handle
Spear, mace, or bow and arrow, midst the foe;
Or be it king-craft and court-usages,
Or feast and harp, or wine and revellers;
But in the women's quarters of the Sháh
What shall I learn? Shall women point the way
To knowledge? Yet if so the Sháh commandeth
My custom henceforth is to visit them."

The Sháh replied: "Be happy, O my son! V. 534

May wisdom rest upon thee! I have heard
But seldom such fair words. Thy brain will grow
Since thou art thus amenable. Dismiss
All ill surmises from thy heart, away
With trouble, and enjoy thyself. Look in
Upon the children just for once: perchance
It will divert them somewhat."
"I will go,"
Said Siyáwush, "to-morrow and perform
The Sháh's command. Behold I stand before thee
Devoted, heart and soul, to do thy bidding.
As thou requirest so will I behave,
Thou art the world-lord; I am but a slave."

§ 7

How Siyáwush visited Súdába

One named Hírbad, purged heart and brain and soul
From evil, never left the Idol-house,
And kept the key. The Sháh commanded him:—
"What time the sun shall draw the sword of day
Seek Siyáwush and further his commands.
Instruct Súdába to present to him
A gift of gems and musk, and let withal
His sisters and the slaves pour emeralds
And saffron over him."
When Sol o'ertopped
The mountains Siyáwush approached the Sháh
And did obeisance. When they had conversed
Awhile in private Kai Káús instructed
Hírbad, then said to Siyáwush: "Go with him
And be prepared to look on something new."
The twain went off together merrily
Without a thought of care; but when Hírbad

Held up the veil that hung before the door V. 535
The mind of Siyáwush foreboded ill.
The women came before him one and all
In festival attire to gaze at him ;
The house was full of musk, dínárs, and saffron,
And at his feet they strewed drachms, gold, and gems :
The floor was covered with brocade of Chín
Enriched with lustrous pearls. Wine, scent, and voice
Of minstrelsy were there, all heads were crowned
With jewels ; 'twas like Paradise, replete
With lovely forms and sumptuous furniture.
Now Siyáwush on entering the bower
Beheld a brightly shining, golden throne,
With patterns wrought in turquoise, royally
Draped with brocade. There sat moon-faced Súdába,
Like Paradise itself in hue and perfume,
Sat like the bright Canopus of Yaman,
Her head adorned with ringlets, curl on curl.
Surmounted by a lofty crown her hair
Descended to her feet in musky lassos.
A slave stood humbly by with golden slippers.
When Siyáwush appeared within the veil
Súdába hastened to descend the throne,
Advanced with graceful gait, saluted him,
Embraced him long, long kissed his eyes and face,
And wearied not to look at him. She said :—
" I offer praise to God a hundred ways
All day and three whole watches of the night,
For no one hath a son resembling thee :
The Sháh himself hath not another such."
Now Siyáwush knew well what that love meant,
And that such fondness was not in the way
Of God, and, since it was unseemly there,
Went quickly to his sisters, who enthroned him
With many a blessing on a golden seat.
He stayed awhile, then went back to the Sháh. V. 536

The bower was full of talk: the women said:—
"Behold the head and crown of courtesy!
'He is not,' thou hadst said, 'like other men:
His soul diffuseth wisdom.'"
Siyáwush
Came to his father's presence and spake thus:—
"I have beheld the veil and what it hid.
All good things in the world are thine, no need
For thee to vindicate the ways of God
Who dost in treasure, scimitars, and troops
Surpass Húshang, Jamshíd, and Farídún."
The Sháh joyed at the words. He decked his palace
Like jocund spring, had wine and harp and things
Prepared, and banned the future from the heart.
That night he went among his dames and talked
Thus with Súdába: "Hide not what thou thinkest
About the judgment and the courtesy
Of Siyáwush, his stature, looks, and speech.
Dost thou approve of him and is he wise?
Deserveth he what others say of him?"
Súdába answered: "Sháh and people never
Saw thy like on the throne, and who is there
To match thy son? Why speak with bated breath?"
The Sháh said: "If he is to live till manhood
We must protect him from the evil eye."[1]
She said: "If my words please, and if thy son
And I are minded that I should bestow
A wife upon him out of his own kindred,
Not from the great ones that are round about—
A consort who shall bear to him a son
Such as he is himself among the mighty—
Then I myself have daughters like to thee,
Begotten of thy seed, of thy pure stock;
Or should he take a child of Kai Árash,
Or Kai Pashín, she would give thanks with joy."

[1] Open praise, especially of the young, was regarded as unlucky.

He said to her: "It is my wish. My name V. 537
And greatness are dependent on the issue."
Next morning Siyáwush approached the Sháh,
And called down blessings on the crown and throne.
The monarch caused all strangers to depart
And, speaking with his son in privacy,
Said thus: "I have in me a secret longing,
Inspired by God, the Maker of the world,
That thou shouldst leave a memory of thy name,
And that a king should issue from thy loins,
That as my face refreshed at seeing thee,
Thy heart should be enlarged at sight of him.
I had thy horoscope to this effect
From archimages that can read the stars,
That from thy loins a king shall come and be
Thy monument. Now choose thyself a wife
Among the great from those within the veil
Of Kai Pashín or bower of Kai Árash;
Make all things ready and bestow thy hand."
He said: "I am the Sháh's slave and I bow
My head before his counsel and behest.
His choice for me is good, whoe'er she be;
The world-lord is a monarch o'er his slaves.
Would that Súdába heard it not! her words
Are otherwise, she hath no mind thereto;
I cannot talk to her of this affair,
And have no business in that bower of hers."
The Sháh smiled at the words of Siyáwush,
Not witting of the quag beneath the straw,
And said to him: "Thy wife must be thy choice.
Súdába least of all need be considered,
Her words are full of loving-kindliness;
She tendereth thy welfare."
Siyáwush
Was gladdened by the words, and reassured
Began to speak the world-king's praise and pay

Him reverence, falling down before the throne,
Yet privily Súdába with her schemes
Still vexed and troubled him, for well he knew,
And his skin burst: "This is her notion too!"

§ 8

How Siyáwush visited the Bower the second Time

V. 538 Another night thus passed and starry heaven
Turned o'er dark earth. Súdába radiant
Sat on her throne and donned a diadem
Of rubies. Then she summoned all her daughters,
Arrayed, and seated them on golden thrones.
Before her stood young Idols: thou hadst said:—
"It is a paradise." The moon-faced lady
Said to Hírbad: "Go say to Siyáwush:—
'Afflict thy feet and show thyself to me.'"
Hírbad made speed to give that lover's message
To Siyáwush who, hearing, stood distraught,
And oft invoked the Maker of the world.
He sought in various ways but found no help;
He trembled, and his legs shook under him;
Then went to visit her and saw her state,
Her face, and diadem. She with her head
And tresses decked with gems rose at his coming,
Gave up the throne of gold to him and, standing
Slavelike, displayed her Idols—gems uncut.
"Behold this throne-room," thus she said, "and all
These handmaids with their golden coronets!
They all are youthful Idols of Taráz,
Whom God hath formed of modesty and charms.
If any one of them delighteth thee,
Survey her looks and form from head to foot."
While Siyáwush was glancing lightly round
There was not one who dared to catch his eye,

And as they talked they said: "The moon itself
Would not presume to gaze upon this prince."
When each, in speculation on her chance, V. 539
Had gone back to her seat, Súdába said:—
"Why dost thou keep thy purpose to thyself?
Wilt thou not tell me what is thy desire,
O thou whose looks are fairy-like with Grace!
For all are struck who catch a glimpse of thee,
Preferring thee to any? Ponder well
Which of these beauties is the worthiest."
But Siyáwush was moved and answered not,
For thoughts like these arose in his pure heart:—
"Far better hold my pure heart's funeral rites
Than take a consort from among my foes.
I have been told by famous warriors
Of all the doings of Hámávarán,[1]
How he entreated the Íránian king,
And how he raised dust from the Íránian chiefs.
This treacherous Súdába is his daughter,
And will not leave our kindred skin or marrow."
He opened not his lips to make reply.
The fairy-faced one raised her veil and said:—
"If one should see the new moon and the sun
Here upon this new throne, it would not be
A marvel if the moon should be despised,
And thou shouldst press the sun in thine embrace.
No wonder if the man that seeth me
Upon the ivory throne, with rubies crowned
And turquoise, should not look upon the moon,
But think all other Beauties beautiless.
If thou wilt make a compact with me now,
Turn not away but set my heart at rest,
One of my youthful daughters present here
Will I make stand before thee like a slave.

[1] *i.e.* the king of Hámávarán—so *King John*, Act I. Sc. i.: "Now say, Chatillon, what would France with us?"

So make a compact with me now by oath,
And disregard no jot of what I say,
That, when the Sháh departeth from the world,
Thou wilt be his memorial with me,
Wilt never suffer me to come to harm,
But hold me dear as life. And now behold!
V. 540 I stand before thee and I give to thee
Myself and my sweet life. I will fulfil
Whate'er thou asketh me—thy whole desire—
And let my head be taken in thy toils."
She hung upon his neck, gave him a kiss,
And of a truth forgot her modesty.
He blushed; the very lashes of his eyes
Were red with shame. He thought: "From this dív's work
Now may the Lord of Saturn keep me far!
I will not treat my sire disloyally,
Nor will I make a league with Áhriman.
If I speak coldly to this wanton dame
Her heart will seethe; she will grow hot with rage,
Make practice of some secret sorcery,
And cause the world-lord to believe in her.
'Tis best to speak her fair and keep her full
Of tenderness and longing."
Then he said:—
"Thou hast not any equal in the world,
And art the rival of the moon itself
In beauty: thou art for the Sháh alone.
As for myself thy daughter will suffice;
None other must be mine. Consent to this,
Propose it to the monarch of Írán,
And mark the answer that thou wilt receive.
I will demand her and will covenant,
And give a pledge before thee with my tongue,
That till her stature equalleth mine own
I will not think of any one besides.

For what thou askest further—since my face
Inspireth in thy soul a love for me—
God's Grace hath made me thus, O thou most fair!
Conceal thy secret; speak of it to none:
For me too silence is the only course.
Thou art the chief of ladies and a queen,
And I will think of thee as mother only."
He spake these words and rose to go, but love
Still filled her wicked soul. When next Káús,
The monarch, visited the women's bower, V. 541
Súdába looked and saw him. She appeared
Before the Sháh with news of what had passed,
And spake thus of the case of Siyáwush:—
"He came and looked all round the hall. I made
A bevy of the black-eyed Idols there.
The hall was such with all the fair-faced girls
That thou hadst said: 'Love raineth from the moon!'
But, save my daughter, he approved of none:
No other fair was precious in his eyes."
The Sháh was so rejoiced that thou hadst said:—
"The moon itself hath come to his embrace!"
He oped his treasury's door: a wealth of gems,
Brocade of cloth of gold, and golden girdles,
As well as bracelets, crowns, and signet-rings,
With thrones and torques such as the noble wear,
And divers kinds of treasures were displayed,
So that the world was filled with things of price.
The Sháh then bade Súdába: "Keep all these
For Siyáwush. When he hath need of them,
Give them to him and say: 'This gift is small;
Thou shouldest have two hundred times as much.'"
Súdába looked in wonder. Full of guile
She thought: "If Siyáwush complieth not,
Then he may take my life and welcome too.
Each practice good and evil, which they use

By stealth or openly throughout the world,
Will I employ; and, should he slight me, bring
A charge accusing him before the king."

§ 9

How Siyáwush visited the Bower the third Time

Súdába sat enthroned, adorned with earrings
And chaplet of wrought gold upon her head.
She called the prince and said, as they conversed:—
"The Sháh hath set these treasures forth, and none
Hath seen such crowns and thrones. The sum of gifts
V. 542 Is past all reckoning: to carry them
Thou wouldst require two hundred elephants,
And I will give to thee my daughter too.
Now look upon my face and head and crown:
What pretext hast thou to reject my love,
And slight my face and person? I am dead
Not seeing thee; I cry out, toss, and suffer:
The light of day is hidden by mine anguish,
My sun is turned to lapis-lazuli.
And now for seven years this love of mine
Hath made my face to run with tears of blood.
Make me a happy woman—none shall know—
Vouchsafe to me a day of youth again.
More than the great king hath bestowed on thee
Will I prepare thee—thrones, crowns, diadems;
But if thou turn aside from my behest,
And if thy heart come not to my relief,
I will destroy thy hope of ever reigning
And make both sun and moon turn black before thee."
"Now God forbid," he said, "that I should give
Religion to the winds for passion's sake,

That I should treat my sire disloyally,
And be a coward and a fool at once!
Thou art his wife—the sunlight of his throne—
And shouldst not perpetrate a crime like this."
She rose in wrath and hate, clutched him and cried:—
"I told thee my heart's secret, but thine own
Was hidden! In thy folly thou dost aim
To ruin me and show the wise my shame."

§ 10

How Súdába beguiled Káús

She rent her robes and tore her cheeks. A cry
Rose from her bower, her clamour reached the street.
The palace was all hubbub; thou hadst said:— V 543
"'Tis Resurrection-night!" News reached the Sháh,
Who hurried from the imperial golden throne
Toward the bower in his solicitude,
And when he found Súdába with rent cheeks,
And all the palace full of babblement,
He questioned every one in deep concern,
Not knowing what that Heart of stone had done.
Súdába wailed and wept before him, tore
Her hair, and told him: "Siyáwush approached
My throne. He caught me in his arms and cried:—
'My soul and body brim with love for thee.
Oh! why art thou so cold to me, my fair!
For thou art all I long for, thou alone?'
This is the truth—I am constrained to tell thee:—
'Twas he that threw the crown from my black locks,
And rent the robe upon my bosom thus!"
The Sháh was troubled, asked her many questions,
And thought: "If she saith sooth, and if she hath

No evil end in view, I must cut off
The head of Siyáwush: that will unlock
These bonds of villainy."
What saith the sage?
"Not lust but blood our thoughts must now engage."
The inmates of the bower, those well advised
And noble servants faithful to their lord,
He bade withdraw and, sitting on the throne
Alone, called for Súdába and his son,
And wisely said to him: "I needs must know
This secret. 'Twas not thou but I that wrought
The ill. I suffer for my thoughtless words:
Why did I call thee to the women's house?
Now I am grieved that thou art thus involved.
Let me have all the truth, show me its face,
And say what passed."
v. 544 The prince related all,
And how he had been wrought on by Súdába.
She cried: "It is a lie. Of all the Idols
It was my person only that he sought;
I told him what the king of earth proposed
To give him publicly and privily,
Told him about my daughter and the crown,
The precious things, brocade, and treasure-hoards.
I told him: 'I will add as much again,
And give my daughter all that I possess.'
He said to me: 'I do not want the goods,
And do not mean to see thy child. Of all
The world,' he said, 'I need but thee—no more.
No wealth or personage availeth aught
Without thine own self.' Then he tried to force me,
And handled me with hands as hard as stones.
I would not grant his wishes. All my hair
He tore and caused these scratches on my face.
I am with child, O monarch of the world!
By thee, but he was near to killing it

With all his struggles, and the world was strait
And dark before me."
Then the great king thought:—
The testimony of them both is worthless,
And this is not a case for instancy,
Because a heart in straits perverteth wisdom.
I needs must first investigate the matter,
And when my heart is calm it will bear witness;
I shall discover which is in the wrong,
And which of them deserveth punishment."
He sought all means of finding out the truth,
And first he smelt the hands of Siyáwush,
His breast, his arms, his head, and all his person.
A scent of wine, rose-water, and fine musk
Was on Súdába, but on Siyáwush
Was none, nor any sign that he had touched her.
The Sháh was troubled, he disgraced Súdába,
And sorely vexed said to himself: "No course V. 545
Remaineth but to put her to the sword."
Then he bethought him of Hámávarán,
How tumult, strife, and battle would ensue;
Next, how, when he was lying there in bonds
And none of all his kin and friends was near,
Súdába was his handmaid day and night,
And faced the trouble uncomplainingly.
His next thought was: "She loved me wholly once:
I must forgive her everything," and then
That he had children by her, and he counted
The anguish of the children no light thing.
But Siyáwush was blameless in the case,
The monarch recognised his probity,
And said to him: "Be not concerned hereat;
Be prudent and consider well thy going.
Talk not about this thing, tell it to none;
The matter must be kept from every one."

§ 11

How Súdába and a Sorceress devised a Scheme

Súdába, conscious that she was disgraced
And that the Sháh's heart was estranged from her,
Sought in her evil case some remedy,
And set anew the tree of her revenge.
She had a woman in the bower, adept
In charms and spells, deceit and artifice,
And one moreover who was great with child,
Near to the time of her delivery.
Súdába told her all and sought her aid,
But said: "First give a pledge of thy good faith."
Súdába took her pledge, gave her much gold,
And said: "Make mention of this thing to none.
Prepare a drug that thou mayest make abortion,
Remain concealed, and keep my secret close.
It may be that my coil of many lies
May gain some credit through this babe of thine,
For I will tell Káús: 'This is my child,
Thus murdered by the hand of Áhriman!'
V. 546 This, it may be, will baffle Siyáwush;
So seek a way to compass it. If thou
Refusest then my lustre with the Sháh
Is dimmed: I shall no more approach the throne."
The woman said to her: "I am thy slave,
And bow my head to thy command and will."
When it was night the woman took the drug
And gave birth to a brood of Áhrimans—
Two children as they had been dív-begotten:
What should a sorceress and a dív produce?
Then, saying nothing to her servitors,[1]
Súdába had a golden salver brought
Whereon she laid those brats of Áhriman,

[1] Reading with P.

And shrieked and flung herself upon a couch.
She hid the woman and retired to bed:
Her wailing reached the palace from her chamber.
Then all the slaves within the palace came
In haste before Súdába, they beheld
Two infants lying dead upon the salver,
And cries rose o'er the palace and o'er Saturn.
The sound of wailing reached and woke Káús
Who listened trembling, asked, and heard how fortune
Had dealt with his fair spouse. Sleepless and anxious
He rose at dawn, went in and saw Súdába
Prostrate, the women frantic, and two babes
In evil plight, flung on a golden salver!
Súdába rained the water from her eyes,
And said: "Behold this bright sun—Siyáwush!
I often told thee of his evil deeds,
But thou didst foolishly believe his words."
The heart of Sháh Káús was filled with doubt,
He went his way, remained a while in thought,
Then said: "What remedy shall I apply?
I must not treat the case with levity."

§ 12

How Káús inquired into the Matter of the Babes

Káús then summoned all the astrologers V. 547
Before him, welcomed them, assigning each
A golden throne, and spake about Súdába,
And of the warfare with Hámávarán,
That they might have a knowledge of her case,
And understand her conduct thoroughly;
He also spake at large about the children,
But kept his own suspicions to himself.
They then took planispheres and astrolabes,
And having spent a sennight on the business

Said: "How can wine be in a cup which thou
Hast filled with poison? These are spurious children,
Not from this mother and the monarch's loins:
We should have found them on the planisphere
With ease if they had been of royal race,
But know that heaven revealeth not their secret,
Nor is this wonder of the earth."
They told
The Sháh and court of that foul, wicked woman.
Súdába wailed and cried aloud for justice,
She called upon the world-lord for redress,
And said: "I was the comrade of the Sháh
When he had suffered and had lost the throne.
My heart is tortured for my murdered babes,
And ever and anon I swoon away."
V. 548 The Sháh replied: "O woman! hold thy peace!
Why dost thou utter such offensive words?"
He gave commandment that the troops on guard
Should search the city and the neighbouring parts,
And bring the wicked woman to the court.
The experienced searchers soon discovered her,
Haled the unhappy woman through the streets,
And carried her in shame before the Sháh,
Who questioned her with kindness, held out hopes,
And made her promises for many days,
Howbeit she confessed not anything.
The noble Sháh was still dissatisfied,
And gave command to bear her forth and use
All means and work by spells, and in the end
To cut her down the middle with a saw
If she persisted, as is common justice.
They bore her from the palace of the Sháh,
And threatened her with sword and stake and pit.
The sorceress answered: "I am innocent.
What can I say before this noble court?"
They told the monarch of the woman's words,

And added: "God alone doth know the truth."
The great king bade Súdába come to him;
The readers of the stars re-said their say:—
"Both babes are clearly children of the witch,
Begotten from the loins of Áhriman."
Súdába said: "They know a different tale,
But dare not speak for fear of Siyáwush,
Who privily hath tied them down to silence.
The lions quake in troops for fear of him, V. 549
This chieftain of the elephantine form,
Who hath the strength of eighty elephants,
And stayeth at his will the river Nile!
A noble host, a hundred thousand strong,
Take flight before him in the ranks of war!
How shall I stand against him? In good sooth
Mine eyes will evermore weep tears of blood.
What have the readers of the stars to do
Save his command and seek his approbation?
While as for thee—thou mournest not thy babes,
Albeit they are thine as much as mine.
If thou believest such a foolish charge
I leave the question to the other world."
The sun withdraweth from the river Nile
Less water than Súdába shed in tears.
The Sháh was sorely troubled at her speech;
He joined with her in weeping bitterly,
And then, and with a broken heart, dismissed her.
He brooded constantly upon the matter,
And said: "I will investigate it throughly,
And find out what the bottom of it is."
He summoned all the archmages of the realm,
And spake about Súdába. One replied:—
"The monarch's grief will not remain a secret.
If thou wouldst clear up what hath been alleged
On each side, throw a stone and break the pitcher,
Because, however dear his son may be,

The Sháh's heart will be still disturbed by thoughts,
While this king's daughter of Hámávarán
Hath made thee doubtful on the other side.
Such being then the statements of the pair
Let one of them be made to pass through fire,
Because high heaven ordaineth that no harm
Shall in this way befall the innocent."

The world-lord called Súdába, seated her
With Siyáwush to parley on the case,
And said at last: "My heart and my shrewd mind
Trust neither of you; fire will show the truth,
And quickly make the guilty infamous."

V. 550 Súdába answered: "What I said is true;
I showed the Sháh two babes untimely born:
What greater outrage can there be than mine?
'Tis Siyáwush that ought to right himself:
He sought to ruin me and did the wrong."

The king of earth then asked his youthful son:—
"What seemeth good to thee as touching this?"

He answered: "Such a charge is worse than Hell!
I would pass o'er a mountain all aflame,
'Twere baseness not to rid me of this shame."

§ 13

How Siyáwush passed through the Fire

The thoughts of Kai Káús ran on them both;
He said: "If either prove a profligate
Will any henceforth call me Sháh? Moreover
My son and wife are blood and brain to me;
Whom then will this perplexing business profit?
Still it is best to purify my heart
From foul surmise and take this dreadful course.
How well the moralizing monarch said:—

'If thou art faint of heart play not the king!'"[1]
He gave instructions to his minister
To have a hundred caravans of camels
Brought from the plain. These went to gather firewood,
While all the people of Írán looked on,
Till two huge mountains rose that might be seen
Two leagues away; so should a key be found
To loose the bonds of bale, so much he yearned V. 551
To learn the truth amid this fraud and wrong.
When thou hast heard the story thou wilt find
Thyself disposed to shun all womankind;
Seek none of them except the virtuous; she
That worketh ill will bring disgrace on thee.
They piled two mounts of firewood on the plain
While all the folk looked on. A path was left
Such that a horseman armed might hardly pass
Between the piles. This done, the glorious Sháh
Bade pour black naphtha over all the wood.
Came ten score men to light and blow the fire,
And thou hadst said: 'The day is turned to night.'
When first they blew there was a mass of smoke,
But presently the tongues of fire rose fast;
The earth became more radiant than the sky,
The people shouted and the flames ascended.
All that were on the plain were scorched and wept
To see the cheery face of Siyáwush,
Who came before his sire with golden helmet,
And raiment all of white. His mien was tranquil,
His face all smiles, his heart all hopefulness;
His black steed's hoofs sent dust up to the moon.
The prince then sprinkled camphor o'er himself,
So bodies are prepared for burial,[2]

[1] Farídún. See vol. i. p. 188.

[2] "Alp-Arselan determined not to survive defeat. He made a display of pious resignation to his fate, . . . by clothing himself in a white robe, or shroud, perfumed with musk."—MHP, i. 211.

And lighting from his charger did obeisance.
The Sháh was shame-faced and his words were kind.
"Be not discomfited," said Siyáwush,
"That fortune taketh such a turn as this.
I am dishonoured: such a state is ruin.
If I am innocent I shall escape,
While if in fault the Maker will not heed me;
V. 552 But by the power of God who giveth good
I shall not feel the heat."
As he drew near
The flames he prayed the Judge that hath no needs:—
"Grant me a passage through this mount of fire,
And free me from my sire's misprision."
Thus
He testified the anguish of his soul,
Then urged his black steed on like smoke. A wail
Ascended from the city and the waste,
For all the people grieved at what was done.
Súdába heard the wailing on the plain,
Went to the palace-roof, descried the blaze,
Wished ill to him, and babbled feverishly.
The people fixed their eyes upon Káús;
Their tongues wagged freely and their hearts were wroth.
Meanwhile the prince so handled his black charger
That thou hadst said: "His steed took to the fire."
From every side the flames closed o'er his head,
And none could see his helmet or his horse,
While all the plain wept tears of blood and asked:—
"How will he ever issue from the flames?"
The noble hero nathless reappeared,
With rosy cheeks and smiles upon his lips.
A roar went up as men caught sight of him:
They cried: "The young Sháh cometh from the fire!"
He came with horse and raiment such that thou
Hadst said: "He beareth jasmine in his breast."

Had flame been water he had not been wetted,
His garments would have holden none of it;
For when all-holy God doth so vouchsafe
The breath of fire is even as the wind.
The horsemen of the host urged on their steeds,
While all the people on the plain threw drachms
Before him; there was universal joy
Among the mighty and the mean alike
As each to other gave the gladsome tidings:— V. 553
"God hath shown mercy to the innocent."
Meanwhile Súdába in her frenzy plucked
Her hair, wept bitterly, and tore her cheeks.
When all unsmirched, unsinged, unstained, unled,
The guiltless Siyáwush approached, his sire
And all the warriors of the host alighted;
But Siyáwush with cheek upon the ground
Gave thanks to God that he had been delivered
Out of that burning mount, and had confounded
His foes' device. Then said the Sháh: "Brave youth,
Of stainless lineage and ardent soul!
None but a holy mother bringeth forth
A son like thee, and such should rule the world."
Then clasped he Siyáwush against his breast,
Excused his own ill conduct, and in state
Moved palace-ward. He took his seat rejoicing,
And placed the royal crown upon his head.
He had wine brought, the minstrels called, and granted
The prince whate'er he would. The Sháh prolonged
Those revels for three days: till they were o'er
No lock or key was at the treasury-door.

§ 14

How Siyáwush begged Súdába's Life of his Father

Káús the fourth day sat upon the throne
Of kings; an ox-head mace was in his hand.
Fierce in his wrath he had Súdába summoned
Before him, told her what had passed, and said:—
"Thou art a shameless woman! Thou hast wrought
Enough of ill and grieved me to the heart.
What part is this that thou hast played throughout
In treacherously seeking my son's life,
In causing him to be exposed to fire,
And practising such witchcraft? No excuses
Will now avail thee; go and get thee ready;
Thou art not fit to live. The punishment
For such a crime as this is to be hanged."
V. 554 She said: "O Sháh! forbear to heap up fire
Upon my head. If I perforce must lose it
In vengeance for the wrong which I have . . . suffered,
Command . . . I am resigned. Yet put revenge
Away. Let Siyáwush declare the truth,
And quench the fires within thee. He hath used
All Zál's own sorceries herein, and therefore
The fierce flames harmed him not."
She said withal
To Siyáwush: "Thou usest witchcraft still!
Shall not thy back of impudence be bent?"
The great Sháh asked the Íránians: "For the evil
That she hath done by stealth, what shall I do?
How shall I punish her?"
All did obeisance,
And said: "The punishment for her is death:
She ought to suffer for her evil deeds."
He bade the deathsman: "Hang her in the street

Upon the gibbet and be pitiless." [1]
At her abandonment the women wailed,
And Sháh Káús was sorrowful of heart;
He strove to hide it but his cheeks were pale.
"Let not thy heart," said Siyáwush, "be troubled,
But pardon for my sake Súdába's fault;
She may be warned and walk advisedly."
"For if," he thought, "she perish by his hand
He will be sorry for it in the end,
And see in me the author of his grief." [2]
The Sháh, who had been seeking some excuse
For mercy, answered him: "I grant thee this
Because I see that right was on thy side."
When Siyáwush had kissed his father's throne V. 555
He rose upon his feet, went to the door,
Brought back Súdába, and escorted her
Home to the palace by the Sháh's command,
Where all the women ran to her again,
And did obeisance.
Now in time the heart
Of Sháh Káús so warmed to her that he
Could not forbear to eye her face in love,
While, for her part, by secret sorceries
She worked on him to ruin Siyáwush
According to the evil of her nature.
The Sháh became mistrustful through her talk,
But spake not aught thereof to any one.
When such events are happening men require
Faith, knowledge, wisdom, and the sense of right,
For in proportion as they keep in sight
The fear of God they reach their heart's desire.
Expect not foolishly that thou shalt find
Balm in a place that fate hath filled with bane,
And if Creation be not to thy mind,

[1] More literally, "and frown."
[2] "Let not . . . grief." The order of the couplets is as in C.

It is not in thy charge. Thy wrath restrain.
Besides the manner of the turning sky
Is not to show its visage openly.
Here saith our guide: "Of all affections none
Hath greater influence than kindred love,
And he who hath achieved a worthy son
Must from his own heart woman's love remove,
Because with her the heart and tongue ne'er meet:
Look for her head if thou wouldst find her feet."

§ 15

How Káús heard of the Coming of Afrásiyáb

The Sháh was deep in love when news arrived:—
"Afrásiyáb hath come with five score thousand
Picked Turkman cavaliers."
V. 556 He grieved to quit
The banquet-hall for war, but called his lieges,
And said: "Of fire and water, earth and air,
In sooth God did not make Afrásiyáb,
But otherwise, who swore so great an oath,
And promised fairly with his tongue, yet now
Is gathering his men of war like dust,
And turning from his oath and covenant!
I must go seek revenge and dim his day,
Perchance destroy his influence in the world;
Else, sudden as the arrow from the bow,
He will array his host, o'ercome Írán,
And waste no little of its fields and fells."
"What is an army for," the archmages said,
"If thou must go in person to the fight?
What need to give such riches to the winds,
And ope the portal of so great a hoard?
Twice in thy haste thy throne's illustrious seat
Hast thou delivered to thine enemies;

Choose some good paladin renowned in war
To take thy place and execute revenge."
The Sháh replied: "I see none here that hath
The rank or might to meet Afrásiyáb,
And therefore like a vessel o'er the water
Must I set forth myself. Depart, that I
May order matters with my counsellors."
Then Siyáwush considered in his heart,
Made of his soul a very wood of thoughts,
And said: "I will conduct this war myself;
I will entreat the Sháh and ask this boon.
Perchance All-righteous God will set me free
Both from Súdába and my sire's distrust:
To snare so great a host will bring me fame."
He girt himself, went to Káús, and said:— V. 557
"I am of rank to fight Afrásiyáb,
And will bring down his horsemen's heads to dust."
The Maker's purpose was that Siyáwush
Should perish in Túrán by vile men's plots
When his ill day should come. The Sháh consented
To his request with joy, bespake him fair,
Bestowed on him new dignities, and said:—
"My gems and treasures are at thy disposal,
And thou mayst say the army is thine own."
The monarch summoned elephantine Rustam,
And said to him with many gracious words:—
"An elephant hath not such strength as thou,
The Nile is not so bounteous as thy hand.
Thou art of world-renown and slow to speak,
Thou who wast fosterer of Siyáwush!
When mines of jewels are bound down with iron
They open when thou bindest up thy loins.
Now Siyáwush hath come with belted waist
And, like a savage lion, talked with me:
His object is to fight Afrásiyáb.
Go with him, keep him underneath thine eye;

When thou art watching I can go to sleep,
But when thou restest I must be alert.
Thine arrows and thy scimitar safeguard
The world: thou towerest o'er the moon in heaven."
The peerless Rustam said: "I am thy slave;
To hear is to obey, for Siyáwush
Is as mine eye and soul, his crown's top heaven
To me."
The Sháh applauded him: "May thy
Pure soul and wisdom ne'er part company."

§ 16

How Siyáwush led forth the Host

V. 558 A clang of trump and kettledrum arose
As Tús, the illustrious captain of the host,
Arrived, and troops assembled at the court.
The Sháh unlocked his treasures and dínárs,
He sent the keys of all his magazines
Of arms, of armour, and of stuffs uncut
To Siyáwush, and said: "My house and goods
Are thine, equip thee as thou thinkest best."
Then from his famous cavaliers Káús
Chose him twelve thousand gallant warriors,
While from the neighbourhood of Kúch and Párs,
Balúch and from the desert of Sarúch
And warriors of Gílán, he chose for war
Twelve thousand infantry and buckler-men.
All that were hero-born throughout Írán,
The gallant, wise, and noble, all who had
The stature and the years of Siyáwush,
With courage, vigilance, and self-command,
Some also of the mighty men of name—
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwarán,—
And five archmages of the Íránians

To bear the flag of Káwa to the field,
These he commanded to go forth together
Beyond the borders to the desert-plain:
Thou wouldst have said: "There is no room still left
On earth for horses' hoofs to stand upon."
The flag of Káwa lifted to the sky
Shone like a moon amid the troops. Káús
Went with them past the frontier, while the dust
Raised by the host rolled swiftly. He reviewed
The warriors with their bridal bravery
Of elephants of war and tymbal-din;
The noble monarch blessed the host and said:—
"O men of name whose steps are glorious!
Good fortune be your sole companion:
May darkness fall upon your foemen's sight.
Be it yours to go with health and favouring stars, V. 559
And come back triumphing and glad."
The prince
Then set the drums upon the elephants,
Bestrode his steed, and bade his warriors mount,
While Sháh Káús with tearful eyes went forward
One day's march with him. Then the twain embraced,
Both of them weeping like a cloud in spring.
They poured down tears of blood and cried aloud
In their distress, for as they went along
Their hearts gave witness to them that thenceforth
They should not look upon each other more.
Thus fortune ever changeth, and our gain
Therefrom is sometimes balm and sometimes bane.
Káús turned toward his throne, and Siyáwush
Marched with his warlike army from Írán
Toward Zábulistán to visit Zál
With Rustam of the elephantine form;
And there with Zál, the favourite of fortune,
He spent some time with wine and minstrelsy.
At whiles he drank with Rustam and at whiles

Consorted with Zawára, sat rejoicing
Upon the throne of Zál or drew the reed-beds.
A month so passed. Then leaving Zál he marched
With Rustam as his paladin, and warriors
Drawn from Zábul, Kábul, and Hind. Moreover
He summoned famous chiefs from every quarter
Until he reached the desert of Harát.
These furnished footmen not a few. He made
Their leader Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And marched toward Tálikán and the Marvrúd.
Thou wouldst have said: "The heaven greeteth him."
Anon he came to Balkh, and injured none
E'en by a bitter word.[1]
On the other side
Bármán and Garsíwaz led on their power
As 'twere a tempest. Sipahram commanded
The rear, Bármán the van. To them there came
News of the youthful chief: "A mighty host—
Famed warriors all—hath issued from Írán."
V. 560 The captain of the host despatched by night
A messenger to tell Afrásiyáb:—
"A great and gallant host hath come. Its head
Is Siyáwush, and there are other princes.
The marshaller is elephantine Rustam,
Whose hands bear one a sword and one a shroud.
If now the monarch so commandeth me,
I will array the host and offer battle;
But do thou gather troops and tarry not,
Because the wind is blowing up the flames."
The bearer of the tidings and his guide,
As they were bidden, urged their dromedaries
Like fire, while Siyáwush made no delay
And marched his army on like wind to Balkh.
The Íránian host drew near; it was not well
To wait an answer from Afrásiyáb,

[1] See vol. i. p. 74.

And Garsiwáz the warrior looking round
Perceived no course except to offer battle.
So when the army of Írán came up
The fight began about the gates of Balkh,
Where in three days were two great battles fought.
The fourth day Siyáwush, the army's Lustre,
Sent infantry against each several gate;
The mighty army entered into Balkh,
While Sipahram fled o'er the stream, and then
Toward Afrásiyáb with all his men.

§ 17

The Letter of Siyáwush to Kai Káús

The prince and army having entered Balkh,
He wrote on silk with spicery and musk
In fitting style a letter to the Sháh,
Beginning with the praise of the Almighty:— V. 561
"From Him are triumph and success Who is
The Lord of sun and circling moon, and giveth
Crown, throne, and casque their lustre, whom He will
Exalting or dejecting, ordering
Without a why or wherefore, though 'tis wise
To acquiesce. From that just Judge who made
The world, who made the seen and the unseen,
May every blessing be upon the Sháh,
All good attend him to the last. I came
To Balkh with joy and triumph through the Grace
Of him who hath the crown and throne—the world-lord.
We fought three days, the fourth God favoured us;
Bármán and Sipahram fled toward Tirmid,
Like arrows from the bow. I am encamped
On the Jíhún, my glorious helm prevaileth.

Afrásiyáb is with his host at Sughd,
While we are still upon the Íránian side;
But, if the Sháh shall bid me, I will go
Across the river and attack the foe."

§ 18

The Answer of Kai Káús to the Letter of Siyáwush

The letter reached the Sháh. It raised his crown
And throne to Saturn, and he prayed to God
That this young Tree might come to bearing fruit;
Then wrote with joy this letter of reply,
Like shining spring or jocund Paradise:—
"Now through the Maker of the sun and moon—
The World-lord who bestoweth crown and throne—
Mayst thou for ever have a joyful heart,
One painless and untroubled, and therewith
Be thine the victory, and thine the Grace,
The cap of power and throne of majesty.
Thou leddest forth an army to the war
With prosperous fortune and a righteous cause,
v. 562 And though thy lip still savoureth of milk
The whippings of thy bow burst in the fight!
May thy bright heart attain its every wish,
And may thy person ever keep its prowess!
Since thou hast won a victory repose
Is needed for a season, but disband not,
Proceed still further, and improve the occasion,
Because this Turkman is a cunning knave,
A man of high birth but an Áhriman,
Albeit he possesseth crown and power,
Affronting with his head the sun and moon.
Be not in any haste to challenge fight;
Afrásiyáb will come to fight with thee,
And, if he cross Jíhún, will trail his skirt

In blood."
He sealed this, called the messenger,
And gave it with injunctions to return.
The messenger sped over hill and dale,
And came to Siyáwush who, when he saw
The letter, was rejoiced and kissed the ground,
Put off the bondage of anxiety,
And carefully observed the Sháh's commands,
Not swerving from his duty as a liege.
Thereafter Garsíwaz, the lion-man,
Approached the monarch of Túrán, like dust,
And told this grievous and unwelcome tale:—
"The chieftain Siyáwush arrived at Balkh
With Rustam as his marshaller, with troops
Past count, and many men of name and leading.
They had full fifty men to one of ours—
Proud warriors, wielders of the buffalo-mace.
Their footmen were like fire, and had shield, quiver, V. 563
And shaft. The eagle soared not o'er their dust.
They had no drowsy heads, and this we proved
Three days and nights, and then our troops lost heart;
But with the Íránians he who needed rest
Retired forthwith from where the brave were fighting,
And after having slumbered rose refreshed
To make him ready for the fight again."
Afrásiyáb raged like a fire. He quitted
The stead of his tranquillity and slumber;
He glared at Garsíwaz, and thou hadst said:—
"Afrásiyáb will sunder him in twain!"
Then in a fury that he could not master
He cried aloud and drave his brother out.
Anon he bade a thousand of the lords
Be summoned and a festival prepared.
They put up hangings over all the waste,

And decked all Sughd with ornaments of Chín:
The day thus passed away with happiness.
Now when the Eye that lighteth earth had gone
From sight, they hasted to take sleep and rest
Except the king, who tossed about distrest.

§ 19

How Afrásiyáb had a Dream and was afraid

As night advanced Afrásiyáb cried out,
And shook upon his bed like one with ague,
While slaves sprang up and sounded the alarm.
V. 564 Whenas the tidings came to Garsíwaz:—
"The glory of the kingdom is obscured,"
He hasted to the presence of the king,
Beheld him lying on the dusty floor,
Embraced him, questioned him, and said: "Come tell
Thy brother all."
He answered: "Ask me not,
Speak not to me till I regain some wits,
But take and clasp me to thy breast awhile."
Anon on coming to himself he saw
A world of lamentation and of hubbub.
They lighted candles and he took his seat,
Still shaking like a bough, upon the throne.
Then said to him aspiring Garsíwaz:—
"Unlock thy lips and tell us this strange thing."
He answered: "None will see a vision such
As I have looked upon this darksome night:
I have not heard of such from young or old.
I saw in sleep a desert full of serpents,
The sky all eagles and the ground all dust,
And so parched up that thou hadst said: 'The heaven
Hath not looked on it since the world began.'
Upon one side my tent-enclosure stood,

And round it was a host of warriors.
A dust-storm rose and laid my standard low,
Blood surged around, the tents and tent-enclosure
Were overthrown, while of my countless troops
The heads were lopped, the bodies spurned aside.
Came like a blast an army from Írán,
What spears they bore and what artillery!
There was a head impaled on every spear,
Another was in every horseman's lap.
A hundred thousand of them sable-clad,
And wielding spears, came charging at my throne.
They drave me from the place where I was sitting,
Made my hands fast, and hurried me along.
I looked around me well and many a time, V. 565
But none of mine own kin was present there.
A haughty and illustrious paladin
Bore me before Káús the Sháh in haste.
A throne was there; its summit reached the moon,
And on the throne was seated Sháh Káús,
The hero, while a youth with moonlike cheeks
Was seated near to him—a youth whose years
Had not yet reached fourteen, who, when he saw
Me standing there before his presence bound,
Came rushing at me like a thundering cloud,
And clave me to the middle with his sword.
I shouted loudly in mine agony,
And with the crying and the pain awoke."
"The king's dream," answered Garsíwaz, "accordeth
To that which his well-wishers would desire.[1]
Thy purposes, thy crown, and throne shall stand,
The fortunes of thy foes be overthrown.
We need a man that can interpret dreams,
One who hath pondered much this kind of lore.
Now let us call the wise, all who may be
Skilled in astrology and grammarye."

[1] Garsíwaz suggests that dreams go by contraries.

§ 20

How Afrásiyáb inquired of the Sages concerning his Dream

From far and near the learnéd in this lore
Assembled at the court to hear the questions.
The king gave audience, placed them in due rank
Before him, spake of matters great and small
With each, and then addressed the company,
The priests, the sages, and astrologers:—
"Tell no one openly or as a secret
This dream of mine, or what I now shall say.
I will not leave the head upon the trunk
Of him who breatheth aught of this affair."
He gave them gold and silver past compute
That they might feel assured, then told his dream.
V. 566 The sages, having heard the monarch's words,
Asked in alarm protection at his hands,
And said: "We cannot read this dream aright
Unless the king with his own mouth shall promise
That he will do us justice when we tell
What seemeth us."
He promised not to harm
Or to impute the ill to them. Their spokesman,
One shrewd exceedingly and skilled to deal
With delicate affairs, said: "King of the world!
I will reveal this secret. From Írán
An army cometh mighty and alert,
The chiefs are brave, the leader is a prince
With many world-experienced counsellors,
Who by his horoscope, though not a Sháh,
Will wreck our land. If now the king shall fight
With Siyáwush earth will be like brocade,
And not a Turkman will survive; the king
Will grieve at having fought with him, for though
Thy hand will slay him, realm and throne will cease

Within Túrán, and earth be filled with strife,
Revenge, and combat on account of him.
Thou shalt bethink thee that my rede is true
What time thy lands lie waste for lack of people.
Although the king become a flying bird
He cannot pass the sky, which as it turneth
Is full at whiles of hate, at whiles of love."
The king grew sad and hasted not to fight,
But told to Garsíwaz the secret, adding:—
"None will seek vengeance if I fight him not; V. 567
Thus both shall live, and men will cease from strife
And woe; Káús will not desire revenge
Upon me, and the earth will not be troubled.
Instead of war and quest of world-wide rule
Be all my dealings peaceful. I will send him
Gold, silver, crown and throne, and precious gems,
For Minúchihr divided earth amiss
And took too small a portion, wherefore I
Will give up some assigned to me at first,
And then mine ills will haply pass from me,
Else will my soul, I fear me, fade away.
When I sew up the eye of fate with treasures
It well may be that heaven will grant me peace.
I only wish for that which is mine own,
And let the harvest be as heaven hath sown."

§ 21

How Afrásiyáb took Counsel with the Nobles

Now when the sky had half revolved, and when
The shining sun displayed its face once more,
The mighty men betook themselves to court
With covered heads to offer their respects.
Afrásiyáb convoked the experienced sages,
And thus addressed them: "It hath been my lot
To see no desert but that made by war,

And many great ones of the Íránians
Have perished by my hand upon the field.
What cities have been turned to hospitals!
What beds of roses into brakes of brambles!
V. 568 What uplands have I made my battle-grounds!
My troops have left their traces everywhere.
It is because unjust kings rule the world
That good of every kind is vanishing.
No onagers are breeding in their season
Upon the plains; hawks rear a sightless brood;
Milk faileth in the udders of the game;
The water in the springs is turned to pitch,
And they are drying up throughout the world;
Musk-bags no longer yield the scent of musk;
All that is right is frayed by villainy,
And population faileth everywhere.
My heart is satiate of strife and outrage:
Fain would I walk the path of godliness.
Then be we just and wise again; let pleasures
Stand in the place of misery and travail.
For our part let us give the world some respite;
Death should not come upon men unawares.
The more part of the world is at my feet:
My court is in Írán and in Túrán,
For see how many of the mighty men
Bring heavy tribute to me year by year!
Now if it be your minds I will dispatch
An embassy to Rustam, and forthwith
Knock at the door of peace with Siyáwush,
And send him every kind of precious gift."

The chieftains gave their answers one by one:
All were for peace and amity. They said:—
"Thou art the monarch and we are thy slaves,
With hearts devoted to perform thy hest."

The councillors dispersed with minds intent
On justice, with no thought of strife and turmoil.

Then said Afrásiyáb to Garsíwaz:—
"Make all thy preparations for the journey
With speed, and tarry not upon the road.
Choose out two hundred horsemen from the host,
And carry precious things to Siyáwush
From all the divers treasures in our hoard.
Take Arab steeds with golden furniture
And Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
A crown of jewels that a king might wear, V. 569
A hundred camel-loads of carpeting,
And take two hundred slaves both boys and girls.
Say thus to him: 'I have no quarrel with thee.'
Hold converse with him and bespeak him thus:—
'I do not set my face against Írán.
All from the bank of the Jíhún to Chín
Is mine, my home is Sughd—a realm distinct.
In truth it is through Túr and valiant Salm
That all the world is thus turned upside down,
And since the innocent Íraj was slain
Our warriors' brains have lost their wits. Írán
Is not divided from Túrán, but wars
And feuds prevented friendship. Now I trust
That God will give good days and joyful news.
He raised thee from the country of Írán,
And giveth thee the friendship of the brave.
Let thy fair fortune dower the world with peace,
Let war and every evil disappear.
Now Garsíwaz hath come to add his wits
To thine, and as the valiant Farídún
Erst shared the world among his gallant sons,
So be it now. Let us adopt his rede,
And turn our feet from battle and revenge.
Thou art a Sháh thyself; speak to the Sháh:
Perchance his warlike purpose may relax.'
Speak also unto elephantine Rustam
In fair words, plying him with arguments,

And, that the business may be carried through,
Give gifts to him like those to Siyáwush,
Except a golden throne; no Sháh is he;
Thrones are above a paladin's degree."

§ 22

How Garsíwaz came to Siyáwush

So Garsíwaz with those rich gifts, which made
V. 570 Earth's face look gay, sped on to the Jíhún,
And there chose one to go to Siyáwush,
And say thus: "Garsíwaz hath come in state,
Hath crossed the river in a single day
By boat, and hastened on the road to Balkh."
The envoy came and gave the prince the message.
Then Siyáwush called elephantine Rustam,
Discussed the matter from all points of view,
And ordered Garsíwaz to be admitted,
Rose when he came and welcomed him with smiles,
While Garsíwaz afar off kissed the ground,
With downcast looks and terror in his heart.
The prince, first seating him below the throne,
Asked eagerly about Afrásiyáb,
And Garsíwaz beholding as he sat
The prince on his new throne, his head, and crown,
Spake unto Rustam thus: "Afrásiyáb,
As soon as he had tidings of thy coming,
Dispatched at once a keepsake to the prince,
And I have brought it with me on my way."
He bade his followers to bring the gifts
And pass along in front of Siyáwush.
All from the city's gateway to the court
Were horses, drachms, boy-slaves, and troops. None knew
The tale of diadems, dínárs, high thrones,
Of slave-boys all with caps and girdles on,
And women-slaves with bracelets and gold torques.

The prince was gratified and smiling gazed
Upon them as he heard the embassage;
But matchless Rustam said: "Come, let us feast
A week and then proceed to the reply,
For this request must be considered well,
And there are many to advise withal."
Far-sighted Garsíwaz on hearing this V. 571
Did lowly reverence and kissed the ground.
They draped a mansion with brocade for him
And requisitioned cooks; but Siyáwush
And Rustam of the elephantine form
Withdrew and sat to canvass all the case,
For Rustam had suspicions through the haste
Of Garsíwaz; they hurried out their scouts
And took precautions. Then said Siyáwush:—
"Come, let us bring this mystery to light:
What motives can they have for seeking peace?
Look for an antidote for this their bane—
Think of the names of five score noble men,
Close blood-relations of Afrásiyáb;
These let him send to us as hostages
To clear the dark suspicions in our minds.
Seest not how fear of us oppresseth him,
And how he taboreth beneath the blanket?[1]
This done we must send one to tell the Sháh;
May be he will abandon thoughts of war."
"This is the proper method," Rustam said,
"In this way only will a pact be made."

§ 23

How Siyáwush made a Treaty with Afrásiyáb

At daybreak Garsíwaz appeared at court,
With covered head and girdle round his loins,
And having been admitted kissed the ground,

[1] *i.e.* attempts to hide what is obvious.

And did obeisance unto Siyáwush,
Who said: "How was it with thee yesternight
Amid this great encampment and such din?"
And added: "As for this affair of thine,
I have considered fully thy proposal,
V. 572 And in our object we are both agreed—
We both would wash out vengeance from our hearts.
Send then this answer to Afrásiyáb:—
'Cease now to muse revenge. He that hath seen
The sequel of wrongdoing should recoil
From acting wrongfully. The heart adorned
With wisdom is as 'twere a hoard of gold
And goods. If bane be not beneath these sweets,
And thou intendest neither wrong nor hurt,
Then, since thou wishest for a stable league,
Dispatch to me by way of hostages,
And as security for thy good faith,
A hundred members of thy family,
All warriors known to Rustam, who will give
The list of names to thee; and furthermore
Whatever cities thou hast in Írán
Surrender, keep within Túrán thyself,
Repose from wars and those that seek revenge,
And let right only be between us two:
It is not well to favour savage pards.
I will dispatch a letter to the Sháh:
He may perchance recall the host in peace."
Then Garsíwaz dispatched a cavalier
Swift as a blast, and said: "Court not repose,
But hasten to Afrásiyáb and say
From me: 'I have proceeded diligently,
And have obtained the whole of what I sought;
But Siyáwush demandeth hostages
If thou wilt have him turn away from war.'"
The messenger arrived and told the king
What Siyáwush and noble Garsíwaz

Had said, and when the king had heard the words
He was exceeding troubled and in doubt.
He thus bethought him: "If a hundred men V. 573
Of mine own kin are taken from the host,
We shall be worsted on the battlefield
For want of those devoted to my cause;
While if I say: 'Demand no hostages,'
Mine overtures will seem to him dishonest.
I e'en must send the hostages if he
Insisteth thereupon. May be these ills
Will pass away from me: in any case
I shall be better wise than otherwise."
The monarch out of those whom Rustam named
Selected some five score of his own kin,
And sent them unto Siyáwush, bestowing
Upon them many gifts and benefits.
He then bade sound the drums and clarions,
He struck the royal tent, evacuated
Bukhárá, Sughd, and Samarkand, and Chách,
The land and ivory throne of Sipanjáb,
And led his troops upon the way to Gang
Without excuses, pretexts, or delays.
As soon as Rustam heard of this retreat
His mind was eased, he sought the prince and said:—
"All now is well, let Garsíwaz depart."
Then Siyáwush gave orders to prepare
A present—armour, crown, and belt, a steed
Of Arab blood with golden furniture,
Besides an Indian falchion in a scabbard
Of gold. When Garsíwaz beheld them, thou
Hadst said: "He seeth the moon upon the ground."
He went his way with blessings on his tongue:
Thou wouldst have said: "He rolleth earth along."

§ 24

How Siyáwush sent Rustam to Káús

Then Siyáwush sat on the ivory throne,
And hung the crown above it. He considered
Whom he should send, what man of courteous speech
V. 574 Whose words had scent and hue, a cavalier
Of valour and a favourite with the Sháh.
Then Rustam said: "On such a topic who
Would dare to speak? Káús is still the same,
His petulance increaseth: what if I
Approach him and make this dark matter clear?
I will rend earth at thy behest. I see
In going naught but good."
Then Siyáwush
Rejoiced, and spake no more of messengers,
But sat with Rustam and discussed the matter,
Then called a scribe and had a letter written
On silk. There first he praised the Judge from whom
He had his fortune, strength, and excellence—
"The Lord of understanding, time, and power,
The Nourisher of wisdom in the soul.
None can transgress His ordinance. The man
Who disobeyeth Him can look for naught
But loss, for He is Author both of wealth
And right. From Him who fashioned sun and moon,
Who illustrateth fortune, throne, and crown,
Be blessings showered upon our sovereign—
The lord of earth, the chosen of the great,
Whose purview reacheth all things good and ill:
May his tall form be wisdom's pedestal.
I came to Balkh this jocund spring, rejoicing;
But when Afrásiyáb had news of me
The sparkling liquor darkened in his cup:
He saw that he was in a strait; the world

Was black and fortune fallen. His brother came
With gifts and many fair slaves richly dight V. 575
To me to seek protection from the Sháh.
Afrásiyáb will yield the crown and throne
Of kings, content with his own realm; observe
His station; never tread Írán's dark soil;
But wash all strife and vengeance from his heart,
And send as hostages a hundred kinsmen.
Great Rustam now hath come with this request—
That as the Sháh's face is a pledge of love,
He will show love toward Afrásiyáb."
The peerless Rustam reached the royal court
In fitting state with flag and retinue,
While loyal Garsíwaz with all dispatch
Went to the presence of Afrásiyáb,
Gave him a full account of Siyáwush,
And said: "He hath no match among the kings
For beauty, mien, address, and common sense,
Good feeling, modesty, and energy:
Brave, affable, a gallant cavalier—
'His breast is wisdom's home,' thou wouldest say."
The monarch smiled and said: "To scheme, my friend!
Is better than to fight. The dream alarmed me,
Foreboding, as I saw, my fall from power;
So in distress I turned to artifice
In order to relieve me of my woe:
I schemed to work with coin and treasury;
Thus everything hath turned out well for me."

§ 25

How Rustam gave the Message to Káús

Now on his side like flying dust came Rustam,
The Lion-man, with folded arms before
The Sháh, who met, embraced him, and inquired V. 576

About the prince, the progress of events,
The warriors, the battles, and the host,
And wherefore he had come. Then Rustam gave
The letter, first extolling Siyáwush;
A ready scribe then read it, and the face
Of Sháh Káús was pitch-like: "I allow,"
He said, "that he is young and all unversed
In ill—no wonder—but thou art a man
Experienced, and hast witnessed good and bad
Of all kinds: thou hast not thy peer on earth,
And Lions grow adept by fighting thee.
Hast thou not seen Afrásiyáb's ill deeds—
How he hath robbed us of food, rest, and sleep?
I should have gone myself but I forbore,
Although it was my wish to fight with him.
I went not, for men said: 'Go not thyself:
Remain here that the young prince may command.'
When God had meant that vengeance should be taken,
And ills had asked a recompense of ill,
Ye sought to gain a heritage thereby,
And that it was which occupied your hearts.
Afrásiyáb hath led your wits astray
By riches plundered from the innocent.
A hundred hapless, misbegotten Turkmans,
Who do not even know their fathers' names!
He will think little of such hostages:
They are to him as water in a stream.
If ye have dealt unwisely I am not
Sick of the toils of war; I shall dispatch
V. 577 A man endowed with wisdom and resource,
To bid the young prince: 'Put those Turkmans' feet
In fetters; burn the valuable things,
Retain not one, send me the men in bonds,
And I will take their heads off. Lead thy host
Intent on fight up to the foemen's gate,
At once relax all discipline, and loose

Thy troops like wolves among the sheep; while thou
Revengest, and thy soldiers sack and burn,
Afrásiyáb will come to fight with thee,
For ease and peace will yield him no delight.'"
Then Rustam said: "O Sháh! be not so moved
Because of this. First hear what I shall say;
And then—the world is under thy command.
Thou saidst: 'In fighting with Afrásiyáb
Cross not the river hastily, but wait
Till he attacketh, for he will not linger.'
Accordingly we waited his advance,
But from the first he oped the door of peace;
It would be vile to haste to fight with one
Intent on peace and mirth; and thy well-wishers
Would never wish the Sháh to break a compact.
When Siyáwush obtained his victories
He charged like some brave crocodile. What wouldst thou
But signet, crown, and throne, the Íránian treasure,
And safety? These thou hast; shun wanton strife;
Wash not a clear heart in a turbid stream.
Suppose that when Afrásiyáb consented
He inly purposed to break covenant:
We on our side are ready for the fight V. 578
With scimitars and lions' claws. Then thou
And noble Siyáwush upon the throne
Of gold shall laugh with gladness in Írán,
While I will lead a small force from Zábul,
And leave Túrán no throne or royal seat,
But with the mace wherewith I fight will make
The sunlight gloomy to Afrásiyáb;
For he and I have often fought, and he
Will scarcely care to try another bout.
Require not then thy son to break the treaty,
Enjoin not what amounteth to a crime.
Why should I hide the purport of my words?

Thy son will never break his promises,
And this deed that the Sháh is contemplating
Will horrify that most illustrious prince.
Dim not his fortunes or it cannot be
But that thine heart will suffer agony."

§ 26

How Káús sent Rustam to Sístán

Káús, the mighty Sháh, was filled with wrath
And raged at Rustam with dilated eyes:—
"So then the truth is out at last! 'Twas thou
That prompted this to root up from his heart
Revenge! Thine aim was ease and not the glory
Of signet, crown, and throne. Abide thou here,
And Tús shall mount the drums as general.
I will dispatch a horseman with a letter
Writ in harsh terms to Balkh. If Siyáwush
Will not obey he shall resign the host
To Tús and come back with his own retainers.
V. 579 He shall receive fit treatment at my hands
For thwarting me, and nevermore will I
Call thee my friend or have thee fight my battles."
Then Rustam cried in dudgeon: "Heaven may hide
My head! If Tús be valianter than Rustam
Then know that Rustam is a nidering."
He left the presence frowning angrily,
And with his forces hasted toward Sístán.
The Sháh anon called Tús and bade him lead
The army forth. Tús coming from the presence
Commanded that the troops should be equipped
With drums and trumpets, be prepared to start,
And put all thoughts of peaceful home apart.

§ 27

The Answer of Káús to the Letter of Siyáwush

Káús then warned a courier, called a scribe,
And set him by the throne to write a letter
Of wrath and strife, as 'twere a poplar shaft.
He first gave praises to Almighty God—
" The Lord of peace and war, the Lord of Mars,
Of Saturn, and the moon, of good and ill,
Of Grace and throne. The turning heavens obey V. 580
His hest, and everywhere His love extendeth.
May health and fortune be for ever thine,
O youth! together with the throne and crown.
Although thou hast forgotten mine instructions,
And foolishly neglected to attack
The foe, yet thou hast heard how he entreated
Írán when he prevailed; side not with him
In wantonness; frown not upon this court;
Let not thy head be snared through youth as thou
Wouldst 'scape destruction from the turning sky.
Send me those hostages bound hand and foot.
It is no wonder if Afrásiyáb
Hath duped thee, if I judge him by his conduct
Toward myself; oft through his glozing words
Have I turned back from fight. Now I said naught
Of peace, and thou hast disobeyed for dalliance
With pretty slaves; while as for Rustam, he
Ne'er hath enough of precious gear and treasure.
Thou hadst no thought of war: thine only thought
Was to succeed to the imperial crown.
Seek with thy sword the gate of full contentment,
For provinces are glories to a king.
As soon as Tús the general reacheth thee
He will dispose all matters great and small.
Set all the hostages without delay

In heavy chains upon the backs of asses.
It is high heaven's purpose that thy life
Should perish by this peace. Then will Írán
Hear of the evil and our prosperous times
Be troubled. Go, prepare thee for revenge
And war, admit no further parleyings.
When, in the course of war and night-attack,
Thou turnest darksome dust to a Jíhún,
V. 581 Afrásiyáb will not resign his head
To sleep, but come to fight; else if thou lov'st them,
And wouldst not have them call thee treaty-breaker,
Resign the host to Tús and come back hither:
Thou art no man for glory, war, and strife."
They sealed the letter, and the messenger
Received it and departed. Siyáwush,
On hearing words so unacceptable,
Called in the messenger and questioned him
Till all was clear. The man detailed the words
Used by the Sháh to Rustam, and described
How Rustam raged against the Sháh and Tús.
Then Siyáwush was much displeased with Rustam,
And musing o'er his father's act, the Turkmans,
And war's vicissitudes, exclaimed: "A hundred
Brave cavaliers, the kinsmen of the king,
Such famous men, our friends and innocent!
If I shall now dispatch them to the Sháh,
He will not ask or think about their case,
But hang them all alive upon the gibbet.
How shall I justify myself to God?
Ill will befall me through my father's acts;
If I so madly fight Afrásiyáb
Without a cause I shall incur God's wrath,
And people will cry shame. If I return
To court, surrendering the host to Tús,
That also will bring evil on my head.

I see ill right and left, and ill in front;
Súdába too will do me naught but ill,
And I have not an inkling of God's will!"

§ 28

How Siyáwush took Counsel with Bahrám and Zanga

Then Siyáwush called from the host Bahrám V. 582
And Zanga son of Sháwarán for counsel,
And having put forth strangers made both sit
Before him. They had shared his confidence
Since Rustam had departed from the host.
Then Siyáwush: "Ill fortune ever heapeth
Ill on my head. My sire's affection seemed
A tree all leaf and fruit; Súdába's wiles
Have made it, one may say, a biting bane.
Her bower became my prison, smiling fortune
Drooped, and as time went on her love bore fire.
Then I preferred war to inglorious feasts,
So I might shun the Crocodile's embrace.
Our good friend Garsíwaz was then at Balkh
With many troops, Afrásiyáb at Sughd
Was threatening us with five score thousand sabres.
We sped as 'twere a blast to seek the fray,
But when they left the province, sending gifts
And hostages, the archimages held
That we should quit the field. Now if the Sháh
Is merely fighting for aggrandisement
He may have war and territory too,
But why such wanton bloodshed, such revenge
Stirred up in others' hearts? The brainless head
Will ne'er know good from bad. Kubád came, died,
And left the world; from that time all was lost.
My deeds please not Káús, who fain would harm me, V. 583
Requiring me to fight without a cause.

I fear that I shall perish through mine oath,
But still we must not turn from God, or fear
To follow our forefathers' steps. The Sháh
Would rob me of both worlds, and yield me up
To Áhriman! If we should fight again
Who can foretell the fortune of the day?
Would I had died, or never had been born,
Since I am fated to endure such bale
And taste of every poison in the world;
And yet the tree hath not attained full growth
Whose fruit is venom and the leafage loss!
Such are the treaty and oaths sworn by God
That, if I swerve from what is right, disaster
Will come on every side; I shall be blamed
Deservedly. The world hath heard that I
Have treated with the monarch of Túrán.
Will God approve or fortune profit me
If I desert the Faith and fight again—
A fall from heaven to earth? I will go look
For some retreat to hide me from the Sháh.
Meanwhile the ordering of this bright age
Is in His hands Who is the Judge of all.
Do thou, famed Zanga son of Sháwarán!
Prepare for toil; haste to Afrásiyáb;
Give not thy head to sleep. The hostages,
And all the precious things—dínárs, crowns, thrones—
V. 584 Convey to him and tell him what hath chanced."
He charged Bahrám son of Gúdarz: "To thee,
Famed man! have I resigned the host and march,
Drums, camp, and elephants. Remain till Tús
The general shall arrive, then give to him
The treasures and the troops in perfect order,
Accounting unto him for everything."
Bahrám was sorely troubled when he heard,
While Zanga son of Sháwarán wept blood,
And cursed the country of Hámávarán.

The two sat there together full of grief,
Distracted by the words of Siyáwush.
Bahrám said: "Nay, not so: thou canst not live
Without thy sire. Write to the Sháh and ask
To have the elephantine hero back;
Then, if Káús still biddeth thee, fight on;
'Tis but a trifle if not trifled with.
Or wouldst thou rest? It may be done with ease;
To beg thy father's pardon is no shame.
If thou wilt send the hostages to him
His heart and gloomy soul will smile; if thou
Art so concerned about them let them go,
There is no hostage for thyself. This letter
Commandeth war, and all may yet be well,
For if Káús doth bid us we will fight,
And bring our foes to straits. Think not vain thoughts,
But capture him by complaisance, and cause not
Bad times for us now that the tree of power
Is fruiting; fill not eyes and crown and throne
With blood, and shrivel not the royal tree.
Ill will befall throne, crown, host, camp, and court
Without thee, for the brain-pan of Káús V. 585
Is as a Fane of Fire, his war and letter
Are both absurd; but if heaven's purposes
Oppose my rede, why say I more?"

The prince
Refused the counsel of those two wise men,
So heaven willed. He said: "The Sháh's command
Is higher than the sun and moon to me;
Yet none from straws to elephants and lions
May brave God's word, and he that disobeyeth
Hath troubled wits and is beside himself.
Must I put forth my hand for shedding blood,
And lead two kingdoms into war? Besides
He is aggrieved about the hostages,
And will demand again what I refused;

While if I quit the field, returning home
Without a fight, the Ṣháh will be incensed
And in his fury harm me. If your hearts
Are troubled by my action heed me not;
I will be mine own guide and messenger,
And quit the camp-enclosure on the waste.
When one is no partaker in my gains
Why should he take to heart my pains?"
When thus
He spake the souls of those two chieftains withered;
They wept at dread of parting and consumed
As in fierce fire; they saw the evil eye
Of fortune secretly upon the prince,
That they would never look on him again,
And wept his case. Said Zanga: "We are slaves:
Love for our leader filleth both our hearts.
V. 586 Now may our souls and bodies ransom thee,
And may our loyalty endure till death."
The gentle, prudent prince replied to Zanga:—
"Go tell Afrásiyáb of what hath chanced.
Say: 'Through this peace my lot is one of war:
Thine are the sweets, the pang and poison mine,
Yet will I keep my covenant with thee
Albeit I shall lose the throne of might.
God is my refuge, heaven my covering,
The ground my throne. I rashly disobeyed
And cannot face the Sháh. Give me a cistern
Where God appointeth and I may not hear
Aught of the evil nature of my sire,
But find for once a respite from his ire.'"

§ 29

How Zanga went to Afrásiyáb

So Zanga, with a hundred noble horsemen,
Bore from the prince's court the hostages,

And all the goods that Garsíwaz had brought.
When Zanga reached the Turkman monarch's city
A shout ascended and the watch espied him.
A noble warrior Tuwurg by name
Went forth to welcome him. At audience
Afrásiyáb arose, embraced him warmly,
And set him by the throne, where he presented
The letter and delivered all the message.
Afrásiyáb was much disquieted
And, having ordered fitting entertainment
For Zanga, called his captain of the host,
Who came like smoke. Now when Pírán arrived [1] V. 587
The monarch cleared the room and spake with him
About Káús and his intemperate words,
His evil nature and his warlike projects.
Afrásiyáb looked grave, his heart was full
For Siyáwush. He told of Zanga's coming,
And asked: "What remedy shall I employ,
How make a league in this embarrassment?"
Pírán replied: "O king! live happily
While time shall be. Thou art more wise than we are,
In treasure and in manhood mightier;
In apprehension, kindness, understanding,
And counsel, none hath wit to supersede thee.
All that have power to benefit this prince
Will grudge not toil and treasure. I have heard
That there is no chief like him in the world
In stature, countenance, and gentleness,
In culture, counsel, and propriety.
His prowess and his wisdom too exceed
His noble birth. No monarch hath begotten
Another such; words cannot do him justice.
He is a prince illustrious and right royal.
If he possessed no virtue but this one—

[1] From this point Pírán, "a verray parfit gentil knight," plays an important part in the poem. Cf. vol. i. p. 55.

That he hath quarrelled with his sire to save
Our hundred nobles' lives, given up the throne
And crown to meaner men, and gone his way,
'Twould not be politic to let him pass
From us. Besides Káús is hoary now;
The time hath come for him to quit the throne;
V. 588 But Siyáwush is youthful, hath the Grace,
And will succeed. The nobles would condemn thee,
And Siyáwush himself would be aggrieved.
If now the king in wisdom shall see fit
Let him dispatch to this wise youth a letter
Entreating him as men entreat their children;
Prepare him here a dwelling, entertain him
With fitting honour, give him a princess
To wife, and let him be esteemed and cherished.
If he remain thy realm will be in peace,
If he go home thy fortune will be bettered,
For he will be in favour with the Sháh,
And honoured by the nobles; both the hosts
May rest, God making him the instrument.
It would be worthy of the Maker's justice
To rectify the age in this regard."
The monarch listened to Pírán and, seeing
What would result, took time to estimate
The good and ill thereof; he then rejoined:—
"Thou counsellest well. Among the chosen chiefs
And veterans thou art incomparable;
Yet have I heard an adage to the point:—
'If thou shouldst make a lion's whelp thy pet,
And foster it however tenderly,
Still, when its teeth and claws are grown, regret
Will be thy lot. The brute will turn on thee.'"
Pírán said: "Let the king of warriors look
With wisdom on this matter. Can ill nature
Befit one who hath not inherited
The ill nature and perverseness of his sire?

Dost thou not see that Kai Káús is old V. 589
And must depart? Then Siyáwush will take
The wide world, wealth untoiled for, hall and palace;
Thus wilt thou gain both realms, their crown and state:
The man that getteth them is fortunate."

§ 30

How Afrásiyáb wrote to Siyáwush

Afrásiyáb, when he had heard this, took
A wise resolve, called an experienced scribe
And spake to him at large about the matter.
The scribe first dipped his pen in ambergris,
Then wrote the Maker's praise, acknowledging
His might and wisdom: "Since He is above
Both time and place how can His slaves' thoughts reach
To Him—the Lord of wisdom, sense, and soul,
Whose justice is the provand of the sage?
His benediction be upon the prince—
The lord of helm and mace and scimitar,
The lord of modesty and reverence,
Pure from wrongdoing both in heart and hand.
From wary Zanga son of Sháwarán
Have I heard all thy message, and my heart
Is troubled that the world-lord is enraged
So much against thee; but what seek the wise,
Whose fortunes are awake, save crown and throne?
Here everything hath been prepared for thee,
E'en to the royal dignity and treasures,
For all Túrán will do thee reverence,
And I for my part long to have thy love.
Then thou and I will be as son and sire—
A sire who is a slave before his son.
Know that Káús hath never shown affection
For thee like mine, for I will ope my heart, V. 590

My hoards, and hand, provide thee with a home,
Protect thee like a son, and leave thee here
As my memorial. Shouldst thou go elsewhere
I should be blamed by high and low alike;
And thou wilt find the going difficult,
Except by Providence and Grace divine,
For yonder thou must lose the sight of land,
And cross the sea of Chín. If no constraint
Is put on thee by God come as a friend.
Troops, treasure, gold, and city all are thine,
And thou shalt need no pretext for departing,
For when thou wouldst be friendly with thy sire,
I will provide thee crown and throne and girdle,
With soldiers to escort thee to Írán,
And bear thee company myself for love.
The quarrel with thy father will not last;
At his age he will soon be sick of strife.
If fire appeareth after sixty-five
It cometh hardly from the damps of age.
Írán and host and treasure will be thine,
And crown with sovereignty from clime to clime;
Moreover I have sworn by holy God
To labour, soul and body, for thy welfare.
I will not harm thee by myself or others,
Or wrong thee even in thought."

He sealed the letter,
Then bade his good friend Zanga gird his loins
To go with speed, and gave him many gifts
Of gold and silver, and a steed caparisoned
With massive gold. When Zanga gave his tidings
V. 591 The prince was glad and sorry too to make
His foe a friend. Would fire give cooling breezes?
A foe, however kind thou mayest be,
Will in the end display his enmity.

§ 31

How Siyáwush gave up the Host to Bahrám

Then Siyáwush wrote thus to Kai Káús
To tell him all: "Though young I want not wits.
While I have done no wrong, the world-lord's temper
Hath burned my heart within me. First Súdába
Occasioned trouble; I was forced to traverse
A mount of fire; my heart's blood bathed my cheeks,
And in the wastes the deer wept sore for me.
Then went I forth in shame and woe to face
The claws of Crocodiles. Both kingdoms now
Enjoy repose, yet is the Sháh's heart like
A sword of steel; my doings please him not,
And if I bind or loose 'tis all the same.
Since he is weary of me I will cease
To trouble him. Ne'er may his heart lack joy.
As for myself I seek the Dragon's breath
In sorrow, doubtful what the turning sky
Intendeth for me—whether hate or love."
Then said he to Bahrám: "Now give thy name
Fresh glory in the world; I leave with thee
The baggage and the camp, the cavaliers,
The treasure, elephants, and kettledrums.
When noble Tús shall come, resign thy charge
To him, be vigilant and fortunate."
He chose three hundred doughty cavaliers,
Had brought to him such money as he needed, V. 592
With jewels fit for kings, a hundred steeds
With golden furniture, a hundred slave boys
With golden belts, and had a reckoning made
Of weapons, beasts, and girdles. Then he summoned
The nobles, spake in many gracious words
To them, and said: "Pírán hath crossed the river,
Sent by Afrásiyáb on secret business

To me, because his people trust in him.
I go to meet him; ye must tarry here.
Look to Bahrám for orders and obey
Him loyally."
The chiefs all kissed the ground
Before the glorious Siyáwush.
At sunset,
When air grew dark and earth ungenial,
The prince, his face obscured by tears, marched forth
Toward Jíhún with all his company.
When he had reached Tirmid, doors, roofs, and streets
Were full of scent and colour like the spring
Up to the gates of Chách: thou wouldst have said:—
"It is a bride with crown and necklaces."
At every stage were carpets laid and viands
Prepared, the whole way to Káchár Báshí,
Where he dismounted and remained a while.
When Tús reached Balkh they told him bitter news:—
"The son of glorious Kai Káús hath gone
To join the leader of the Turkman host."
Tús called in all the troops and marched them back
v. 593 To court. The news made Kai Káús turn pale;
He mourned and heaved a deep, cold sigh; his heart
Was full of fire, his eye of tears for wrath
With Siyáwush and with Afrásiyáb;
But, doubtful if the sky would prove a friend
Or enemy, he put away his anger,
And thought no more of warfare and revenge.
On hearing: "Siyáwush hath crossed the river
With troops to us, his envoy hath arrived,"
Afrásiyáb bade all the chief estates
Go forth with kettledrums to welcome him.
Pírán chose out one thousand of his kin
To meet the prince with gifts, apprised the host,
And gat him ready four white elephants.
One bore a turquoise throne backed by a flag

Of tree-like size, surmounted by a moon;
The flag was gold-embroidered violet silk;
Upon the golden throne were three gold seats,
And each of them was covered with brocade.
There were a hundred noble steeds whose saddles
Were jewelled gold. The host, thou wouldst have said,
Was like the earth when graced by heaven's love.
When Siyáwush had heard: "A company
Hath come," perceived the banner of Pírán,
And heard the sound of elephants and steeds,
He hurried forth, embraced Pírán, inquired
About the king and kingdom, and exclaimed:—
"Why hast thou vexed thy soul by coming hither,
O captain of the host? My heart's first wish V. 594
Was to behold thee safe and sound."
Pírán
Kissed his fair, charming face, his head and feet,
And thus addressed the Maker: "Thou know'st all things,
The open and the secret. Hadst Thou shown me
His soul in dreams, in sooth mine agèd head
Had been made young."
He said to Siyáwush:—
"Now that I see thee radiant and robust
I offer praises to Almighty God.
Afrásiyáb will be a father to thee,
The chiefs this side the stream will be thy slaves.
Above a thousand of my kin will wait
On thee with earrings in their ears, my treasures
Are all thine own; be ever hale and happy.
Draw not a single breath of discontent,
For men and women are alike thy slaves,
And, if thou wilt accept my hoary head,
I too will gird my loins to do thee service."
They went with joy, discussing divers matters,
While through the city there were sounds of harp

And rebeck; sleepy heads were roused; the soil
Was blackened with fresh musk; the Arab steeds
All spread their wings. When Siyáwush saw this
Tears rained from both his eyes, his thoughts were troubled,
For he recalled the hocktide in Zábul
When it was decked up to Kábulistán,
And he had gone as guest to Rustam there
With all the famous men for company,
And how the folk had showered down gold and gems,
And sifted musk and ambergris o'erhead.
He thought about Írán and heaved a sigh,
His heart burned with the memories of home.
V. 595 He turned his head to hide this from Pírán,
Albeit that chieftain marked the grief and pain:
He understood the thoughts of Siyáwush,
Grew sorrowful himself and bit his lips.
They lighted at Káchár Bashí to breathe
Awhile. Pírán scanned Siyáwush, and marked
With wondering eyes his speech, breast, neck, and shoulders,
Invoked God's name, and said: "Illustrious prince!
Thou art the memory of sovereigns,
And hast three things that not a prince beside
Possesseth. First, thou makest men discern
The nature of the seed of Kai Kubád;
While secondly, thou hast adorned thy tongue
With such uprightness and such goodly speech;
And thirdly, one would say: 'Thy face distilleth
Thy love on earth in showers.'"

The prince replied:—

"O venerable sage who sayest sooth,
World-famed for thy sincerity and love,
Far from unkindness and from Áhriman!
If thou wilt make a covenant with me
I know that thou wilt keep it, and will make

This land my home in love and confidence
In thee, my friend! and, if my sojourn here
Is well, I need not weep for what I did:
If otherwise command me to depart,
And point me out the way to other realms."
Pírán replied: "Have no such thought. Since thou
Hast left Írán, in no wise hasten from us,
And lose our monarch's love. Though his repute
In this world is not good, he is a man
Of God, hath wisdom, prudence, and high rede,
And turneth not in lightness to bad ways.
He is my blood-relation[1] too; with him V. 596
I have, as paladin and counsellor,
High rank, abundant treasures, thrones, and troops.
Above a hundred thousand cavaliers
Obey me here. Twelve thousand of my kinsmen
Stand day and night before me. I have land,
Flocks, lassos, bows, steeds, implements of war,
And hoarded treasure; I need no man's aid.
Let all this be thy ransom if thou wilt
Abide with us. I swear by Holy God
That I will serve thee both with heart and soul.
I will not suffer any ill to thee. . . .
But no man knoweth high heaven's purposes."
The prince rejoiced, his heart was freed from care.
They sat and ate, and grew like sire and son,
Then in high spirits sped along the road
To Gang—the Turkman monarch's fair abode.

§ 32

The Interview of Siyáwush with Afrásiyáb

On hearing: "Glorious Siyáwush hath come,"
Afrásiyáb descended to the street V. 597

[1] Afrásiyáb and Pírán were cousins.

Afoot with girded loins right eagerly.
The prince beholding him got off his horse
And ran to meet the king. The two embraced,
And kissed each other's head and eyes. Then said
Afrásiyáb: "Now evil is asleep
Throughout the world; henceforward war and tumult
Will cease; the deer and pard will drink together.
The world was troubled by brave Túr, but now
Our realms are sick of strife; while they were filled
With turmoil the world's heart had no repose;
Peace is restored by thee; the age hath rest
From battle and hot blood, all in Túrán
Are now thy slaves, all hearts are full of love
For thee; in soul and body I am thine;
Pírán the general is thy kinsman too.
I will regard thee with a father's fondness,
And ever show to thee a face all smiles."
Then Siyáwush with many blessings answered:—
"May justice be the fortune of thy race.
Praise to the Lord, the Maker of the soul,
From Whom are peace and battle and revenge."
The monarch, hand in hand with Siyáwush,
Sat on the throne of might, and as he gazed
Upon the prince, said: "None can equal him
On earth in stature, looks, and kingly Grace."
V. 598 Then to Pírán: "Káús is old and witless
To lose sight of a son so tall and gifted
As this. I marvelled, when I first beheld him,
How any man with such a son could look
At aught besides."
He made choice of a palace,
Laid cloth of gold for carpets, set a throne
Of gold with feet like heads of buffaloes,
Bedecked the palace with brocade of Chín,
And furnished it throughout, then bade his guest
Go thither and abide in full content.

When Siyáwush arrived before the hall
Its dome reached Saturn, he went in and sat
Upon the golden throne, his wise soul wrapped
In thought, until the monarch's board was spread,
And he was summoned; there they talked together,
And entered on a course of happiness.
The banquet o'er they went with harp and minstrel
To hold a drinking-bout. They sat and quaffed
Until the world grew dark and heads became
Bemused with wine, then Siyáwush went home
With glee, and in his cups forgot Írán.
Afrásiyáb gave heart and soul to him,
And could not sleep for thinking. That same night
He said to Shída:[1] "When the morn shall come, V. 599
And Siyáwush hath risen, go to him
With mine own kinsmen and the paladins
Of highest rank, take with you noble steeds
Caparisoned with gold, and other gifts."
Accordingly the warriors presented
To Siyáwush gold coins and royal gems
With courteous greetings, and the king too sent
Him many gifts. Thus was one sennight spent.

§ 33

How Siyáwush displayed his Prowess before Afrásiyáb

One night the king spake thus to Siyáwush:—
"To-morrow morning let us play at polo;
I hear that none among the warriors
Can face thy mall on thine own ground."
"O king!"
Said Siyáwush, "be fortunate and ever
Beyond the reach of ill! Kings look to thee
For teaching; who surpasseth thee? Day shineth
When I behold thee, from thee I accept
Both good and ill."

[1] His son.

Afrásiyáb replied:—
"My son! be ever glad and conquering.
Thou art a prince, the glory of the throne,
A royal crown and backbone of the host."
V. 600 They went out laughing to the Ground at morn
In gallant trim. Then said Afrásiyáb
To Siyáwush: "Let us be opposites,
Select our partners, and make up our sides."
He answered: "What will hand and mall avail?
I cannot play against thee. Take some other
As thine antagonist, I am thy partner—
One of thy horsemen on this spacious Ground."
The monarch was delighted at his words,
Esteeming those of others only wind.
"Nay, by the life and head of Sháh Káús,"
Said he, "thou shalt be friend and opposite.
Display thy prowess to the cavaliers,
So that they may not say: 'He chose amiss,'
But give thee praise while I laugh out with wonder."
Then Siyáwush replied: "'Tis thine to bid:
The cavaliers, the Ground, and malls are thine."
Afrásiyáb selected for his side
Kulbád,[1] Púlád, Pírán, Jahn, Garsíwaz,
With Nastíhan the gallant, and Húmán,
Who would drive balls from water. Then the king
Sent over to the side of Siyáwush
Rúín, illustrious Shída, and Arjásp
The mounted Lion, and Andarímán
The doughty cavalier.[2] Said Siyáwush:—
"Ambitious king! will any of these dare
To face the ball? They side with thee, while I
Shall have to play alone and watch them too.
So with the king's leave I will bring to help me
A few Íránian players on the Ground
V. 601 In order that both sides may play the game."

[1] Cf. p. 119. [2] For most of the above names see vol. i. p. 92.

The monarch heard the words, gave his consent,
And from the Íránians Siyáwush chose seven
Well skilled. The tymbals sounded, dust arose,
While what with cymbal-clash and clarion-blare
Thou wouldst have said: "The ground is all a-quake!"
Afrásiyáb hit off and drove the ball
Up to the clouds just as it should be struck.
Then Siyáwush urged on his steed and smote
The ball, or ever it could reach the ground,
So stoutly that it disappeared from sight.
Thereat the exalted monarch bade his men
To give another ball to Siyáwush,
Who as he took it kissed it, and there rose
A flourish from the pipes and kettledrums.
He mounted a fresh steed, threw up the ball,
And drove it out of sight to see the moon.
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky attracted it."
There was not on the ground his peer, and none,
Had such a beaming face. The monarch laughed,
The nobles grew attentive and exclaimed:—
"We never saw a rider like this chief!"
The famous monarch said: "Of such a kind
Is each one gifted with the Grace of God;
But Siyáwush hath bettered all report."
The attendants set a throne beside the Ground,
The monarch beaming sat down with the prince,
And told the company: "The Ground and balls V. 602
Are at your service."
Then the Íránians played
A match with the Túránians. Dust flew up
With shouts as these or those bore off the ball;
But when the Turkmans played too angrily
In their endeavours to obtain a goal,
And when the Íránians intercepted them
So that the Turkmans' efforts were in vain,
Displeased with his own people Siyáwush

Cried to them in the olden Persian tongue:—
"Is this a playground, or would ye cause strife
In our dependent and precarious state?
When ye are near the limits look aside
And let the Turkmans have the ball for once."
His horsemen rode more gently after this
And did not heat their steeds, then as the Turkmans
Were shouting for a goal Afrásiyáb
Perceived the purpose of the words, and said:—
"I have been told by one of mine own friends
That Siyáwush hath no peer in the world
For archery and might of neck and shoulder."
Thereat the prince uncased his royal bow;
The monarch, having asked to see it first
That one of his own kin might prove its strength,
Regarded it with wonder, and invoked
Full many a royal blessing, then presented
The bow to Garsíwaz the sworder, saying:—
"Bend thou this bow and string it."
That malignant
Failed, to his great amazement. Siyáwush
V. 603 Took back the bow and sitting on his knees
Bent it and strung it, smiling. Said the king:—
"With this one might shoot over sky and moon!
I too in days of youth had such a bow,
But times are changed, and no one in our lands
Would dare to grasp this bow when war is toward,
Save Siyáwush, and he with such a chest
And arms would wish none other on his charger."
They placed a target on the riding-ground,
And Siyáwush, who challenged none to shoot,
Bestrode his wind-foot charger like a dív,
Gripped with his legs, and shouted as he went.
In sight of all the chiefs his arrow hit
The bull's eye. Then he set upon his bow
Another shaft, of poplar wood, four feathered,

And in the same course hit the second time.
Next wheeling to the right he hit the target
Just as he would. This being done he flung
The bow upon his arm, approached the king,
And lighted from his steed. The monarch rose:—
"Thy skill," said he, "is witness to thy race."
Returning to the lofty palace thence
They went with happy hearts as bosom-friends;
There took their seats, arranged a drinking-bout,
And summoned skilful minstrels to attend.
They quaffed no little wine, grew glorious,
And drank the health of Siyáwush. The king
While sitting at the board arranged a gift—
A horse and trappings, throne and diadem,
Uncut stuffs, such as none had seen before,
Gold coins, and silver coins in bags, turquoises,
With many girl and boy slaves, and a cup V. 604
Which brimmed with shining rubies. Then the king
Commanded to count up those precious gifts,
And certain of the dearest of his kinsmen
To bear them to the house of Siyáwush.
Thus said he to his troops: "In everything
Regard the prince as if he were your king."

§ 34

How Afrásiyáb and Siyáwush went to the Chase

Afrásiyáb said to the prince: "Come with me
Some day a-hunting to refresh our hearts,
And banish all our troubles in the chase."
"Whene'er thou wilt," he answered, "whereso'er
Thy heart disposeth thee to lead the way."
One day they went. The king took hawks and cheetahs,
And many of Írán and of Túrán

Of all conditions hastened to the meet.
The prince spied onager upon the plain,
And, sped from his companions like the wind,
With reins held lightly and feet firmly pressed
He galloped o'er the hollows and the hills,
And, having cloven an onager in halves,
Made them the silver and his hands the scales,
And found the two sides equal to a grain.
The king and all his train watched eagerly,
Exclaiming: "What a noble swordsman this!"
And one man to another called and said:—
"Ill from Írán hath come on us erewhile,
And our brave leaders have been put to shame:
Now is the time to fight against the Sháh."
But Siyáwush still chased his onagers
And spread destruction over all the plain.
He galloped over valley, hill, and waste,
Employing arrow, spear, and scimitar.
V. 605 Where'er he went he piled a heap of game,
And killed enough for all the company.
Thence to the palace of Afrásiyáb
They took their way with gladness in their hearts.
The monarch in his pleasures and his griefs
Held intercourse with none but Siyáwush,
Confided not in Jahn and Garsíwaz,
Or other such; he took no joy in them,
But passed with Siyáwush his days and nights
In merriment. Thus while a year went by
They shared all griefs and pleasures equally.

§ 35

How Pírán gave his Daughter to Siyáwush

One day Pírán conversed with Siyáwush
And in the course of talk said: "In this land
What man surpasseth thee? Our monarch's love

Doth make him talk of thee e'en in his sleep.
Know that thou art to him as jocund spring,
His idol, and the solace of his griefs.
Great art thou and the son of Kai Káús;
Thy many virtues raise thee to the moon;
Yet since thy sire is old, and thy heart young,
See that thou lose not the imperial throne.
Thou art a king both here and in Írán—
A noble monument of former monarchs—
Yet see I none, among thy blood-relations,
That looketh on thee with abundant love!
Throughout Túrán I find none fit to be
Thy peer, thy partner, or antagonist.
Thou hast no brother, wife, or sister; thou
Art like a single rose-branch in a coppice.
Look for a consort worthy of thyself,
And cease to sorrow and regret Írán;
It will be thine when Kai Káús is dead,
And thine will be the crown and warriors' throne.
The curtains of the king conceal three maidens,
All richly dight, such that the moon itself
Perforce must gaze upon, and Garsíwaz
Hath also three of noble race on both sides V. 606
Through Fárídún related to the Sháh,
With crowns and high estate. I too have four—
Slaves if thou wilt. The eldest-born—Jaríra—
Unmatched among the fair shall be thy handmaid."
Then Siyáwush: "I give thee thanks. Henceforth
Regard me as thy son. She is the meetest
Because for me alliance with thy house
Is best. She will rejoice my soul and body:
I want none else; herein thou layest on me
A life-long obligation."
When Pírán
Left Siyáwush he hasted to Gulshahr,
And said: "Prepare Jaríra's wedding outfit

In favour of the exalted Siyáwush.
Shall not we joy to-day when we receive
The grandson of Kubád as son-in-law?"
Gulshahr led forth her daughter, having set
A coronet upon the maiden's head,
Arrayed her with brocade, gold, drachms, dínárs,
Adorned and scented her like jocund spring,
And then presented her to Siyáwush.
They thus espoused her to the prince, and set her
Like a new moon upon the throne. None knew
V. 607 What wealth she brought, how many golden seats
Inlaid with gems. When Siyáwush beheld
Her face she pleased him, and he laughed for gladness.
He joyed in her by night and day: his heart
Forgot Káús.
Thus heaven revolved awhile,
And ever as time passed the atheling
Increased in rank and favour with the king.

§ 36

How Pírán spake to Siyáwush about Farangís

The good Pírán said to the prince one day:—
"Thou knowest that the king our sovereign lord
Exalteth o'er the dome of heaven his crown,
And that by night and day thou art his soul,
His heart and intellect, his might and wisdom;
If thou shouldst be allied to him by marriage
Thou wouldst increase in greatness with each breath.
Now since my daughter hath become thy wife
I tender all thy interests great and small,
And though Jaríra hath much charm, and thou
Didst choose her out of all, it would become thee
To take a jewel from our monarch's skirt.
Of his fair daughters Farangís is best:

Thou wilt see nowhere else such face and hair.
She bettereth the cypress-tree in stature;
Her musky tresses form a sable crown;
Her parts and knowledge pass her loveliness,
While wisdom standeth as a slave before her.
Thou mayst well ask her of Afrásiyáb.
Where is a beauty like her in Kashmír,
Or in Kábul? The noble king will be V. 608
Thy kinsman, and thy Grace and throne will shine.
With thy permission I will speak to him,
And thus win from him favour for myself."

Then Siyáwush gazed on Pírán and said:—
"God's word must be fulfilled; none can withstand
Heaven's secret purpose. If I may not go
To see Írán, the face of Kai Káús,
Or Zál who was a foster-sire to me,
Or matchless Rustam—mine own jocund Spring—
Bahrám or Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Or Gív, Shápúr, or other mighty men,
If I must needs be severed from their sight,
And have to choose a home within Túrán,
Do as thou sayest and arrange a match,
But speak not of it save in privacy."

While thus he spake he heaved a deep, cold sigh,
And filled the lashes of his eyes with tears.
Pírán made answer: "Every man of wisdom
Will let his circumstances rule his action.
Thou canst not scape the turning of the sky V. 609
Whence come our retributions, wars, and loves.
Grant that thou hadest friends within Írán:
Thou didst commend them unto God and leave them.
Thy house and home are here; the Íránian throne
Is not at present to be made thine own."

§ 37

How Pírán spake with Afrásiyáb

Píran, thus having learned the prince's wishes
On all points, rose, proceeded to the court
In merry pin, dismounted, was admitted,
And stood awhile before Afrásiyáb,
Until the king, who loved him well, spake thus:—
"Why standest thou before me this long while?
What wish hast thou on earth? What is thy purpose?
My host, my treasures, and my gold are thine,
For me thou profitest in every thing.
If I have any prisoner in bonds,
Whom 'twould be grief and danger to release,
Yet will I take from him my chains and wrath,
And for thy sake turn anger into wind.
Ask what thou wilt—a great thing or a small,
E'en sword or signet, throne or diadem."
The sage replied: "May this world praise thee ever!
As for myself, I have wealth, treasure, host,
And, by thy fortune, sword and crown and throne.
I bring in private for the royal ear
A long suit on behalf of Siyáwush,
Who said: 'Say to the monarch of Túrán:—
"I have grown blithe of heart and covet fame.
Thou like a sire hast reared me on thy breast
Till joy hath caused my fortune to bear fruit.
Extend thy kindness, make a match for me,
For I depend on thee in weal and woe.
V. 610 Thou hast a daughter now behind thy curtains
Well worthy of my palace and my throne:
Her mother named her Farangís, and I
Shall find my pleasure in deserving her."'"
Afrásiyáb grew grave, tears filled his eyes.
He said: "Concerning this I have already

Told thee my views, and thou didst not approve them.
A sage of lofty rede once said to me:—
'O thou that fosterest a lion's whelp!
Why lay upon thy soul a fruitless task?
Thou toilest to complete his excellence,
But at his fruiting thou wilt cease to bear.
His fosterer will be the first to feel
His claws when he is strong enough to fight.'
Again, in presence of the mighty men,
Archmages learnéd in astrology
Took observations with their astrolabes,
And all gave utterance to the same effect
That my child's son would do me wondrous hurt,
Destroy my throne, my treasure, provinces,
My host, and palace, and that I should find
No place of refuge; he would seize the realm,
And by his deeds bring evil on my head.
Why should mine own hand plant a tree whose fruit
Is bane with colocynth for leaves? A child
Sprung from Káús and from Afrásiyáb V. 611
Would prove a fierce flame or an ocean-wave.
I know not whether love will take the prince
Back to Írán, or fix all his regards
On us; but why drink poison wittingly?
One must not lightly take a serpent's breath.
While he remaineth he shall be a brother
To me, and if he goeth to Írán
I will dispatch him to his sire in state
On such wise as the All-just shall approve."
Pírán replied: "O king! Let not thy heart
Be grieved hereat. Those born to Siyáwush
Will be possessed of wits, reserved, and shrewd.
Trust not what readers of the stars may say,
Deal with his case according to thy wisdom,
For from this noble pair a prince will spring,
Whose head will be exalted to the sun

As king both in Írán and in Túrán.
Then those two kingdoms will repose from strife.
The seed of Farídún and Kai Kubád
Will ne'er produce a more illustrious Plant,
While, if the sky shall purpose otherwise,
No taking thought will make it love him more.
What is to be will be beyond all doubt;
No caution minisheth what is to wax.
See what a glorious enterprise is this!
Ask what thou wilt of fortune and 'tis thine."
Afrásiyáb replied: "Ill cometh never
Of thine advice. I order as thou wishest;
Depart and carry out thy kindly purpose."
Pírán bent low, did reverence, gave great praise,
And so departed, came to Siyáwush,
And told him all. That night the joyful pair
Sat o'er their wine and from their souls washed care.

§ 38

The Wedding of Farangís and Siyáwush

V. 612 Now when the sun upon the turning sky
Displayed its head as 'twere a golden shield,
Pírán the chief girt up his loins and mounting
A swift steed rode toward the prince's palace
To wish him joy of his high dignity,
And said to him: "Prepare thyself to-day
For welcoming the daughter of the king,
And if thou hold'st me worthy of the office
I will myself make ready to escort her."
The prince was moved and blushed. He loved his wife,
The daughter of Pírán, as his own heart
And soul, but said: "Go, do whate'er thou wilt:
Thou knowest that from thee I have no secrets."

Pírán on hearing this went to his home
With heart and soul intent upon the business.
The door-key of the store-house where he kept
His uncut stuffs Pírán gave to Gulshahr,
Who was the chief wife of the paladin—
A lady much esteemed and bright of mind.
They chose the best things in the treasury—
A thousand lengths of cloth of gold from Chín,
With emerald-studded plates, cups of turquoise
Filled with fresh aloe-wood and musk-deer's glands,
Two crowns of jewels worthy of a king,
Two bracelets with two earrings and one torque;
Of carpets likewise sixty camel-loads,
Three sets of raiment made of cloth of gold
With patterns traced in gold of ruddier hue,
With divers kinds of jewels sewn therein;
Of gold and silver thirty camel-loads,
With salvers and apparel made in Párs,
A golden throne, four seats, three pairs of shoes
With emeralds patterned on a golden ground,
Two hundred servants bearing golden cups V. 613
(Thou wouldst have said: "The house will not contain them!"),
Three hundred servants wearing crowns of gold,
About one hundred kinsmen of the king,
Each with one tray of musk and one of saffron:
These with Gulshahr together with her sisters,
In golden litters curtained with brocade,
Went in procession with the precious things.
The lady took a hundred thousand coins—
Dínárs—to fling among the crowd. They brought
The goods to Farangís and blessed her too.
Gulshahr then kissed the ground and said to her:
"The planet Venus mateth with the Sun."
Pírán, for his part, and Afrásiyáb
Were instant on account of Siyáwush.

They gave the bride as custom and their Faith
Required, and had the contract duly witnessed.
As soon as they had finished pact and plight
Pírán dispatched a message to Gulshahr
Like smoke that she should go without delay
To Farangís to take her to the prince.
Thereon Gulshahr told happy Farangís
That she should go that night to Siyáwush,
And ornament his palace with a Moon.
She spake. They decked the bride at once and ranged
Her musky tresses o'er her rosy cheeks.
Then like a new moon Farangís approached
That youthful prince, the wearer of a crown.
V. 614 They joyed in one another and their love
Grew ever greater as the moments sped.
For one whole week slept neither fowl nor fish,
And no man went to rest; the earth became
A very garden through its whole extent
With sounds of minstrelsy and merriment.

§ 39

How Afrásiyáb bestowed a Province on Siyáwush

Thus passed the sennight, then the king prepared
Great gifts of Arab steeds, sheep, coats of mail
Withal, helms, maces, lassos, and dínárs,
With purses full of drachms, suits of apparel,
And things both great and small. They drew a list
Of lands and cities 'twixt the sea of Chín
And their own march; the region was in length
A hundred leagues, its breadth no man could measure.
For all that sovereignty in royal fashion
They made the patent out on painted silk,
Which with a golden throne and golden crown
The king sent to the house of Siyáwush.

He next prepared the hall of banqueting,
And those that came to it from far and near
Found wine, and tables ready spread, and cooks;
Folks eat, and whatsoever each could carry
He took away with him to his own home:
The monarch's guests thus passed a week in joy.
He opened wide the dungeons' bolted doors, V. 615
Exulting as the favourite of fortune.
The eighth day Siyáwush with brave Pírán
Approached the king at dawn for leave to go
To their own homes. Both offered compliments,
And said: "O gracious worldlord! may thy days
Be ever joyous and thy foes' backs bent."
Thence they returned rejoicing and their talk
Was all about the monarch of the world.
Thus for a year in justice and in love
The circling heaven turned and brought no care;
Then from the presence of the monarch came
A friendly messenger to Siyáwush,
And said: "The king saith: 'O illustrious chieftain!
I have bestowed upon thee all the realm
From here to Chín: go round and view the lands.
In any city where thou findest ease,
Contentment, and no more to be desired,
Abide in gladness and prosperity;
Stint not thy soul one moment of delight.'"
Then Siyáwush, rejoicing at his words,
Struck up the pipes and drums, and packed the loads.
A host accompanied him on the way
With arms and treasure, signet-ring and crown.
They fitted many litters and arranged
The curtains for the ladies. In one litter
The prince placed Farangís and, having loaded
The baggage-train, led forth the company.
They went with merriment toward Khutan V. 616
With all the famous men escorting them,

Because Pírán, that general favourite,
Was of that state, and Siyáwush had promised
To spend a month with him. The days were passed
In banqueting or in the hunting-field
Until the month was ended; then there rose
The din of drum at cock-crow, and the prince
Went to his realm, preceded by Pírán,
And followed by his troops. The news got wind,
And all the nobles sought their overlord.
They set forth from their homes with joyful hearts,
And, as the custom was, bedecked the land,
And there was such a bruit within that realm
That thou hadst said: "The earth is raised to heaven."
Such were the din and blast of clarions
That thou hadst said: "All hearts leap from their seats."

They found one day a cultivated tract:
It was a goodly and well favoured site,
On one side mountains, on another sea.
Upon a third side was a hunting-ground,
Secluded, full of trees and rivulets—
A place to make the old heart young again.
Then to Pírán spake Siyáwush and said:—
"See what a noble site these fields afford!
Here will I fashion me a goodly seat
To be my heart's delight, a spacious city
Containing palace, hall, and pleasure-grounds;
I will exalt the buildings to the moon,
And make them worthy of the crown and throne."

Pírán replied: "O thou of goodly rede!
Accomplish all that thy heart purposeth.
V. 617 If thou shalt bid, according to thy plans
I will erect a moon-attaining seat;
I ask thee not for treasure or for lands,
And for thy sake reck not of time or place.
And Siyáwush rejoined: "O blesséd one

Thou bring'st the tree of greatness into fruit.
Thine are my weal and wealth; I notice first
In every place thy toil on mine account.
I will erect a city on this ground
Such that beholders shall remain astound."

§ 40

How Siyáwush built Gang-dizh

I open now the door of history—
  The charming record of the days of yore—
To speak of Gang-i-Siyáwush to thee,
  The city, and the city's ancient lore.
Praise be to Him by Whom the world was wrought,
  The Maker of the unknown and the known,
The Lord of being and not being; aught
  Besides hath peers, but God is One alone.
Praise to the Prophet, and to those who bore
  Him company our praises be addressed,
And since the righteous flourish here no more
  Speak not of taking this world for thy rest.
Where are the heads and crowns of kings of kings?
Where are the gallant, noble athelings?
Where are the doctors and the scientists?
Where are the labour-bearing annalists?
Where are the modest fair who charmed the sight, V. 618
  And gently uttered words of graciousness?
Where is the nestling of the mountain-height,
  Inured to scorn, discomfort, and distress?
Where he that touched the cloud-rack with his head,
  And whither is the lion-hunter gone?
They have but bricks and dust to form their bed,
  And he that sowed good seed is blest alone.
From dust we come and shall return to dust,
And all is dread, distraction, and distrust.

The world will outlast thee; its mysteries
How wilt thou ken? 'Tis full of instances;
Shall we ignore them? Six and sixty years
Hast thou been scheming: turn thy face away
From toil and emulation. Thy compeers
Left thee in multitudes while thou didst stay
A greedy hand upon the world to lay,
And shalt thou not at last be e'en as they?
List to the story of a bygone day.
Since earth is void of those illustrious men
Why should ambition's crown be sought by thee?
In their days justice ruled the world, and then
Earth flourished under their supremacy.
So listen to the tale that I shall tell
About Gang-dizh, and see thou mark it well,
Because the world hath not in any part
Another place so grateful to the heart
As that which Siyáwush built up of yore,
And no small travail in its structure bore.
There is a wilderness across the sea—
An arid waste. Beyond it is a land
Inhabited, whose cities furnish thee
With all provision ready to thy hand.
V. 619 Thou wilt perceive a mountain farther on
Unmatched in loftiness, and thereupon
Gang-dizh. It is no hurt for thee to know
That 'tis one hundred leagues around below,
And eyes that look aloft are dazed anon.
Explore and thou wilt still be at a loss
To find the way of access to the place;
The rock is three and thirty leagues across,
Presenting everywhere a solid face.
If only one man harnessed for the fray
Were stationed for each league, to find a way
A hundred thousand men would not avail
On barded steeds and clad themselves in mail.

A spacious city next will meet thine eye
With rose-beds, gardens, open space, and hall,
Stream, river, and hot baths, while minstrelsy,
Perfume, and brilliant hues pervade it all.
The hills are stocked with game, the plains with deer.
Once having seen it thou wilt tarry here,
And in thy rambles o'er the higher ground
Will pheasants, peacocks, partridges be found.
No winter's frosts to summer's heats succeed,
There is no lack of food, repose, or mirth,
Thou wilt not see a single invalid;
In short it is a paradise on earth.
The water here is wholesome, clear, and bright,
The whole champaign in vernal garb is dight.
Its length and breadth have thirty leagues extent
According to the Persian measurement,
And one league and a half in altitude:
'Twould weary any one to scale the height,
And when the place is from the summit viewed
None ever saw a scene more exquisite.
When Siyáwush had visited the place
He chose it out of all Írán to bear
His name, and built of marble, stone, cement, V. 620
And some material to us unknown,
A wall above one hundred cubits high
And eight and thirty broad; the hold out-ranged
Both shaft and catapult, but thou shouldst see
The place itself, for one that hath not seen it
Will, thou wouldst say, be angry with the poet.
The prince endured much hardship thereabout
All for the sake of greatness, throne, and crown,
And made himself in that delightful spot
A charming seat with palace, hall, and park.
He planted many trees, and made the place
Like Paradise, and for its flowers chose
Narcissus, tulip, hyacinth, and rose.

§ 41

How Siyáwush discoursed with Pírán about the Future

The noble Siyáwush went with Pírán
One day to see the place whereof the sight
Would make the agéd young. It was delightful,
With treasuries everywhere fulfilled with wealth;
And this imperial seat pleased Siyáwush
More than all other seats of kings and nobles.
When they were leaving Siyáwush was sad,
V. 621 And asked the astrologers: "Will this abode
Secure me Grace and fortune, or shall I
Regret what I have done?"
They all replied:—
"This place will not prove very fortunate."
The prince was angry with the astrologers;
His heart was full of pain, his eyes shed tears;
His hand relaxed his swift-paced courser's reins,
And hot tears trickled down. Pírán exclaimed:—
"My lord! what is the cause of this distress?"
"High heaven," he said, "hath filled my heart and soul
With pain and trouble, since what I amass,
My home, and treasury, will be my foe's
At last. Ill will be ill and I shall die.
The fairest spot in this world is Gang-dizh
Where by the Grace of Him Who giveth good
My wisdom and my fortune have not slept,
And I have raised the summit to the Pleiads.
Still am I busy gathering works of art,
But when the place is decked, and precious things
Abound, mine own enjoyment will be short;
Another will be seated in this palace.
The joy is not for me, or for my child,
Or hero of my race. My life will close
Ere long; I shall not want a hall or palace.

Afrásiyáb will have this for his throne,
And death will overtake me for no fault
Of mine. Such is the mystery of heaven
With its vicissitudes of joy and grief!"
Pírán replied: "My lord! encourage not V. 622
Vain thoughts, Afrásiyáb safe-guardeth thee,
And on thy finger is a royal signet.
I also, while my soul is in my body,
Will strive to keep my faith to thee unbroken;
I will not let the wind pass over thee,
Or breezes tell the hairs upon thy head."
Then Siyáwush: "O honourable man!
I see that honour is thy one desire.
Thou knowest all the secrets that I have,
Thou who art shrewd of heart and sound of limb!
Now will I tell thee by the Grace of God
What I have learned of heaven's purposes,
And advertise thee what will be hereafter
When I am gone from halls and palaces,
So that thou mayst not, seeing such, exclaim:—
'Why were they not disclosed to Siyáwush?'
Pírán, thou warrior exceeding wise!
Hear what I say; no lengthy time will pass
Ere by the hand of our shrewd-hearted monarch
I shall, though guiltless, cruelly be slain.
Another will possess this crown and throne.
Thou wilt prove just and true, but heaven's purpose
May not be thwarted. By a slanderer's words,
And evil fate, my blameless head will suffer.
Írán will be in conflict with Túrán,
Revenge will make life wretched, and the earth
Will be in travail through its length and breadth;
The scimitar of feud will rule the age.
Thou wilt see many standards from Írán
Approach Túrán—red, yellow, black, and violet—
With ravaging and bearing off of spoil,

And scattering of treasures. Provinces
In plenty will be trampled underfoot
Of horses, and the streams of water fouled.
V. 623 The monarch of Túrán will then repent
Both of his words and works, but penitence
Will not avail when homesteads are in flames.
Both here and in Írán will be the din
Of war, and my blood will convulse the world.
Thus hath the Almighty written in the sky
By Whose decree seed sown will bear its fruit. . . .
Come, let us give ourselves to joy and feast:
When it is time for us to pass we pass.
Why set thy heart upon this Wayside Inn?
Why toy with treasure? Why complain of toil?
Our wealth will be another's. Why should one,
Because he is a king, enrich his foe?"

Whenas Pírán had heard and taken thought
His heart was filled with trouble at these words.
He said: "I have brought evil on myself
If this that he hath spoken be the truth.
I drew him to the country of Túrán,
And scattered through the world the seeds of feud.
I drew him to Túrán by mine own efforts,
And gave to him a province, crown, and wealth,
Not recking of the king's repeated warnings."

And then his loving heart suggested this:—
"Who hath revealed to him these mysteries—
The motions and the purpose of the sky?
He surely must be thinking of Írán,
Of Kai Káús, and of the imperial throne;
It is the memory of happier days."

Pírán with these words solaced his own heart,
And entered on no prudent policy.
V. 624 The two discussed the future all the way,
Then lighting from their steeds they ceased from talk,

And, having had a golden table dressed,
Wine, harp, and minstrelsy were in request.

§ 42

How Afrásiyáb sent Pírán into the Provinces

They thus passed seven days in merriment,
Discoursing of the monarchs of the world.
The eighth day came a letter from the king
To bid Pírán: "Choose from the warriors
A host and go toward the sea of Chín.
Thence cross the marches to the river Sind,
Demand the tribute from the provinces,
And over-run the borders of Khazar."
Then from the portal of the paladin
Shouts rose, while drums and tymbals shook the ground,
And troops from all sides gathered round Pírán—
A mighty army eager for the fray.
Whenas the troops had mustered at his gate
He bade farewell and marched, while Siyáwush,
Rich in dínárs and goods of every kind,
With well appointed steeds, remained behind.

§ 43

How Siyáwush built Siyáwushgird

A cameleer brought from Afrásiyáb,
In hottest haste about the time of sleep,
To Siyáwush a letter full of love,
And blazoned like the starry sky: it ran:—
"Since thy departure I enjoy no pleasure,
My thoughts permit me not a moment's peace.
Moreover I have sought thee out a seat,
Such as thou wilt approve, within Túrán.

Though it be pleasant whither thou hast gone,
V. 625 And griefless there, yet quit thy realm and bring
The heads of evil-wishers to the dust."
The chieftain packed the baggage and set forth
With all speed as the king commanded him.
A thousand female camels with red hair
They loaded up with various merchandise.
He made a hundred camels carry treasures
And drachms, while forty others bore dínárs.
Ten thousand swordsmen went along with him—
Picked horsemen from Írán and from Túrán—
Preceded by the baggage-train and litters
With lovely ladies in their bravery.
Of rubies and turquoises fit for kings,
Or torques and diadems inlaid with gems,
Of ambergris, of aloe-wood, and musk,
Of spicery, brocade, and silken cushions,
From Párs and Chín and Mizr were thirty loads.
The leader and his noble retinue
Proceeded till they came to blithe Bahár.
When he arrived he pointed out a site
Two leagues in length and breadth. Thereon he built
A city famous for its rosaries,
Its lofty palaces, and orchard-grounds.
He limned within the hall full many a picture
Of kings, of battle, and of banqueting,
And painted there Káús with mace and armlets,
Crowned on his throne, with elephantine Rustam,
With Zál, Gúdarz, and all that company.
Elsewhere he limned Afrásiyáb, his army,
Pírán, and Garsíwaz the vengeful one.
That pleasant city was the talk of all
Good men both in Írán and in Túrán.
V. 626 At every corner was a cupola,
Whose summit reached the clouds. There minstrels sat

And sang while chiefs and warriors kept guard
Around. Siyáwushgird the common voice
Called it; that city made all hearts rejoice.

§ 44

How Pírán visited Siyáwushgird

Now when Pírán returned from Hind and Chín
All men were talking of the glorious city,
For, founded on the auspicious day of Ard,
Siyáwushgird was famed throughout Túrán.
He heard of palace, orchard, garden, hall,
Plain, streamlet, hill, and dale, and longed to see
What Siyáwush had done with that fine site.
Pírán took with him all his retinue—
A thousand wise and valiant warriors—
Men fit to share with him in the rejoicings.
On his approach the prince went with the host
To welcome him. Pírán on catching sight
Of Siyáwush alighted, as did Siyáwush,
Who clasped him closely. Coming to the city
They went around what erst had been a thorn-brake,
But then lamp-bright with palace, hall, and pleasance.
The chief Pírán went everywhere, invoked
Full many a blessing on the prince, and said:—
"If Grace and royal height and wisdom too
Were not thine own in this thine undertaking
How could results like these have been achieved?
Be this thy monument among the brave
And noble till the Resurrection-day,
And may thy sons and sons' sons live rejoicing— V. 627
World-lords triumphant and magnanimous."
Pírán surveyed part of that jocund city,
Then reached the hall and grounds of Siyáwush,
And in high spirits and ambitious hopes

Proceeded to the home of Farangís.
The daughter of the king met, greeted him,
And proffered him a handsel of dínárs.
When, seated on the throne, he looked around,
And saw the crowds of servants standing by,
He uttered many words of thankfulness,
And praised the Maker; then they fell to feasting
With wine, cup-bearers, meats, and minstrelsy,
And thus they passed a sennight wine in hand,
Now blithe and joyous-hearted, now bemused.
On the eighth day Pírán produced the presents
Brought from abroad, and other fitting gifts
Of rubies, royal jewelry, dínárs,
Brocade, crowns all inlaid with precious stones,
And steeds with golden furniture, the saddles
Of poplar-wood, their pummels leopard-skin.
He gave a coronet to Farangís,
With earrings, bracelets, and a jewelled torque,
Then went upon his way toward Khutan
In order to attend his sovereign.

On reaching home he spake thus to Gulshahr:—
"Whoe'er hath seen not jocund Paradise,
And known what things Rizwán[1] hath planted there,
Should see this splendid place, this paradise
Of thrones and palaces, where Siyáwush,
V. 628 The wise and glorious, sitteth like the sun
Inside the palace of the blest Surúsh.
Allow thyself the pleasure of a visit;
The lord is goodlier than his city; thou
Wouldst say: 'He lighteth up the Occident!'
See Farangís—all loveliness and lustre,
As 'twere a two weeks' moon beside the sun."

Swift as a bark that speedeth o'er the sea
He went thence to Afrásiyáb, and told
What he had done, what tribute he had brought,

[1] See p. 39, *note*.

How he had battled in the land of Hind,
And laid ill-doers' heads upon the dust.
The monarch asked how Siyáwush had prospered,
And of his city, province, crown, and throne.
Pírán replied: "Whoever shall behold
The springtide-gaiety of Paradise
May in good sooth mistake this place for that,
And this illustrious monarch for the sun.
I saw a city such that none will see
Its like on earth in Chín or in Túrán.
What with its wealth of gardens, halls, and streams,
Thou wouldst have said: 'There wisdom mixed with mind!'
One must dismiss fault-finding where is naught
To blame. When from afar I saw the palace
Of Farangís 'twas like a hoard of jewels
As bright as light. If now Surúsh should come
From Paradise he would not have the Grace,
The majesty, the common sense, the splendour,
And ordered usance of thy son-in-law,
Who is as good as thy glad heart would wish.
Both realms too rest from strife and stir, like men V. 629
Restored to reason. Mayst thou ever have
The rede of princes and the heart of sages."
The monarch gladdened at the words on hearing
That this his Bough of promise was in bearing.

§ 45

How Afrásiyáb sent Garsíwaz to Siyáwush

Afrásiyáb made known to Garsíwaz
Pírán's account without suppressing aught,
And said: "Go blithely to Siyáwushgird,
And scan it well. The heart of Siyáwush
Is on Túrán; he thinketh not of home

Now that he hath farewelled the throne and crown,
Farewelled Gúdarz, Bahrám, and Kai Káús.
He looketh not to Rustaṁ son of Zál,
Nor taketh mace or battle-ax in hand,
But hath erected, where was once a field
Of thorns, a city like the jocund spring,
Hath raised a lofty dwelling-place therein
For Farangís, and holdeth her in honour.
Prepare to visit noble Siyáwush,
Say little when thou seest him on the throne,
But judge him from a monarch's point of view
At chase, at wine, on mountain or on plain,
And in assemblies, show him all respect
Before his nobles and exalt his name.
Prepare for him exceeding many gifts
Of horses and dínárs, of crowns and girdles,
V. 630 As well as jewelled thrones, brocade of Chín,
And armlets, maces, swords, and signet-rings,
With carpeting and trinkets of all kinds.
See what thou findest in the treasury,
And take besides a gift for Farangís.
Go thou with naught but praises on thy tongue,
And, shouldst thou find a joyous, smiling host,
Abide two sennights in that jocund city."
Thereat the noble Garsíwaz selected
A thousand cavaliers, men of repute,
To go with all speed to Siyáwushgird.
The prince when news arrived went forth with troops
To welcome Garsíwaz; the two embraced
And Siyáwush inquired about the king,
Then going back provided for his guests.
Next morning early Garsíwaz drew nigh
And brought the monarch's message and the gifts.
When Siyáwush saw what Afrásiyáb
Had sent him he was like a rose in spring;
Then mounting on his proudly stepping steed,

And followed by the Íránian cavaliers,
Took Garsíwaz about the place, and when
He had shown all went to his home again.

§ 46

The Birth of Farúd the Son of Siyáwush

At that time came to Siyáwush like wind
A cavalier who brought good tidings, saying:—
"The daughter of the captain of the host
Hath borne a babe as 'twere the shining moon—
A glorious child, whom they have named Farúd,
And when Pírán at night received the news
He bade me and another cavalier:— V. 631
'Go bear the joyful tidings to the prince.'
The mother also of the precious babe—
Jaríra, chief among the high-born dames—
Commanded from her couch the slaves to smear
The infant's hand with saffron, and to take
The impression on this letter's back, and said:—
'Bear this to Siyáwush, whose wish is granted,
And tell him: "Stricken though I be in years,
Yet notwithstanding God hath made me glad."'"
Then Siyáwush thus answered: "May this babe
Ne'er leave the seat of majesty unfilled!"
And gave the messenger so many drachms
That he who bare them wearied of the weight.
When Garsíwaz had heard the news he said:—
"Pírán to-day is equal to a king."
They sought the house of Farangís with joy
And told her those glad tidings. Garsíwaz
Beheld her sitting on her ivory throne,
A crown set with turquoise was on her head,
While many slaves with golden caps were standing
With moon-like cheeks in presence of the Moon.

She came down from her throne and, greeting him,
Inquired about his longsome journey's toil;
But Garsíwaz was wroth, was wholly changed,
And thus he thought: "Let but a year pass thus
And Siyáwush will care for nobody;
Throne, kingdom, host, and treasure will be his."
He writhed but hid his feelings, and exclaimed
With pallid cheeks to Siyáwush: "Thou hast
The fruit of toil, enjoy the gains for life!"
They took their seats within the golden hall
Upon two jewelled thrones of gold, rejoicing
In fortune; minstrels and cup-bearers came,
V. 632 And Garsíwaz, amid the joy and din
Of minstrelsy, forgot his own chagrin.

§ 47

How Siyâwush played at Polo

Now when the bright sun made the distance clear,
And showed its face from heaven to all the land,
The prince went from his palace to the Ground
To play at polo. Garsíwaz came up
And drove the ball, which Siyáwush pursued
And caught it fairly with the polo-stick,
While his opponent only found the dust.
The ball struck by the prince was seen no more:
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky hath drawn it up!"
Then to his eager followers he said:
"I leave the ball and sticks and Ground to you."
Whenas the warriors came upon the Ground
The Íránians in the tussle took the ball,
While Siyáwush rejoiced at their success,
And looked as 'twere a noble cypress-tree.
He bade a golden throne be set and contests
With javelins to take place, both princes sitting
Upon the throne to watch the combatants.

The cavaliers rushed on the Ground like dust
And, dart in hand, began to strive for honour.
Then Garsíwaz spake thus to Siyáwush:—
"O king renowned, the Memory of kings!
Thy prowess is still greater than thy birth:
Vouchsafe to let the Turkmans witness it:
Display before them just for once what thou V. 633
Can'st do in javelin-play and archery."
The prince, who laid his hand upon his breast
At this, arose and mounted on his horse.
They bound together coats of mail five thick—
Coats any one of which would tire a man—
And set them up at one end of the Ground,
While all the troops stood looking. Siyáwush
Took up a royal spear wherewith his father
Fought in Mázandarán and slaughtered lions.
He went upon the Ground, this spear in hand,
And plied his reins like some mad elephant.
He pierced the coats of mail and bore them off,
The links and joints alike had given way.
The charge thus made he raised his spear erect
And flung the coats of mail about at will.
Then valiant Garsíwaz and other horsemen
Went on the Ground with their long javelins,
And many gathered round those coats of mail,
But found not one whose fastenings had not yielded.
The prince then called for four shields of Gílán,
With two cuirasses also of bright steel,
And likewise for his bow and poplar shafts.
With six thrust through his belt and three in hand
He set another on his bow and gripped
His saddle firmly. Then in sight of all
He shot the ten shafts, piercing every time
The shields and both cuirasses. Old and young
Applauded and invoked the name of God.
"Thou hast, O prince!" said Garsíwaz to him,

"No equal in Írán or in Túrán.
Come now! Let us two go upon the Ground
Before this company, there let us grasp
Each other's leathern belt as warriors
Would do in battle. I have not a peer
Among the Turkmans, thou wilt see few steeds
V. 634 Like mine, and thou in the Íránian host
Art matchless both in prowess and in stature.
If I shall take thee from thy charger's back,
And throw thee to the ground, acknowledge me
Superior both in prowess and in might,
While if thou layest me upon the earth
I wheel no more upon the battlefield."
But Siyáwush made answer: "Speak not thus.
Thou art a prince, a Lion of the fray;
Besides thy charger is a king to mine,
Thy helmet is Ázargashasp to me.
Make choice of some one else out of Túrán
To strive with me, but not by way of fight."
Then Garsíwaz: "O seeker of renown!
No harm will come of pastime such as this."
But Siyáwush replied: "It is not well:
I cannot fight thee. Two opposed in sport
Fight on in earnest; anger filleth them
Although they smile. Thou art the monarch's brother,
And tread'st the moon beneath thy horse's hoofs;
I will perform thy bidding but not break
Our good relations by an act like this.
Call from thy friends some Lion of the fray,
Let him be mounted on this swift-paced steed,
And if thou art resolved that I should fight,
And lay the heads of proud ones in the dust,
I will endeavour not to be disgraced
Before thy presence, O illustrious prince!"
Ambitious Garsíwaz was flattered, smiled,
And thus addressed the Turkmans: "Noble men!

Who is there fain to make his mark on earth?
Who will be matched with Siyáwush and lay
The chief of all the nobles in the dust!"
The Turkmans heard him and their lips were locked.
At length Gurwí the son of Zira said:—
"I am prepared to fight if Siyáwush
Hath no antagonist."
The prince's face V. 635
Was full of frowns and sternness at the words,
But Garsíwaz said unto him: "O prince!
No warrior in our host can match Gurwí."
Then Siyáwush: "I hold it but a trifle
To fight with any noble but thyself:
Two warriors should be chosen out of these
To strive with me upon the battlefield."
There was another noble hight Damúr,
Who had no equal in Túrán in strength.
He, when he heard the words of Siyáwush,
Came and made ready swift as smoke for fight.
They wheeled about, and Siyáwush began
By snatching at the girdle of Gurwí,
And holding by the buckle lifted him
And flung him on the plain, but used no mace
Or lasso. Then he turned upon Damúr
And, catching him about the neck and body
In firm embrace, unhorsed him with such ease
That all the chiefs were lost in wonderment.
The prince thus bore him safe to Garsíwaz;
Thou wouldst have said: "He carrieth a bird!"
Then, having lighted down and disengaged,
He sat down laughing on the golden throne;
But Garsíwaz was wroth at that exploit;
His heart was sullen and his cheek was pale.
They hied them homeward from their golden seats,
"Raised," thou hadst said, "o'er Saturn in the ascendant,"
And all the famous men and fortunate

Assembled for a week with harp and wine.
Upon the eighth day they prepared to go,
And Siyáwush in spite of what he knew
Yet wrote a letter to Afrásiyáb,
Full of submission and kind interest,
And gave unstinted gifts to Garsíwaz;
Anon the Turkmans left that noble city
Rejoicing, and conversed about the land
And most accomplished prince; but Garsíwaz
V. 636 The vengeful said: "Mishap hath come to us,
For from Írán the king hath summoned one
Who causeth us to sit in blood disgraced.
Fierce Lions like Damúr and like Gurwí—
Both battle-loving warriors—became
Thus abject, helpless, and contemptible
When clutched by one foul-hearted cavalier.
He will push matters further, and I fail
To see in our king's actions head or tail."

§ 48

How Garsíwaz returned and spake Evil before Afrásiyáb

He went thus minded to the Turkman court
Without repose or sleep. Afrásiyáb
Asked many questions which his brother answered
And gave the letter; this the smiling king
Perused with joy. The famous noble marked
The brightened features of Afrásiyáb,
And sunset found him all revenge and anguish.
All night he writhed and when its pitch-hued robe
Was riven by clear day his vengeful head
Still slept not, and he sought Afrásiyáb.
They sat and talked in private. Garsíwaz
Said to his brother: "Siyáwush, O king!
Hath wholly changed, the envoys of Káús

Come often secretly, he correspondeth
With Rúm and Chín, and drinketh to his father.
Moreover he hath gathered many troops, V. 637
And soon will vex the king's soul. Had not Túr
Become so fierce he had not wronged Íraj,
But now our hearts resemble fire and water
Opposed; thou wouldest, but in vain, unite them,
And keep the tempest hidden out of sight.
Had I withheld this trouble from thy knowledge
I should have smirched my name before the world."

The king was grieved and said to Garsíwaz:—
"The bond of blood between us moveth thee.
We will take counsel with ourself three days
For more assurance; if the case be clear
It shall be thy part to undo the coil."

The fourth day Garsíwaz appeared at court
With helmet on and tightly girded loins.
The monarch called him to an interview,
Talked much about the case of Siyáwush,
And said: "O thou memorial of Pashang!
Whom have I in the world at hand but thee?
I must disclose the secret of my mind;
Observe what thoughts occur to thine. My heart
Was troubled at that evil dream, my brain
Affected somewhat, yet I kept from war,
And Siyáwush for his part hurt me not.
When he farewelled the throne of might he made
My love the weft across his wisdom's warp.
He was obedient and I used him well.
I gave to him a province and my treasure,
But kept my griefs and sorrows for mine own.
I bound him to me by the ties of blood,
Foregoing thoughts of vengeance on Írán,
And did not grudge my treasures or my child, V. 638
But trusted him with both my precious Eyes.
Now, after all these pains and benefits,

And sacrifice of province, crown, and wealth,
For me to purpose ill to Siyáwush
Would raise no little outcry. If I do
An injury however slight to him
The mighty men will cry out shame on me,
And I shall be a butt for every one.
Of beasts the lion hath the sharpest teeth,
His heart is not afraid of scimitars,
And if a whelp of his shall be aggrieved
He will lay all the meadow desolate;
Moreover if we persecute the guiltless
How shall the Judge of sun and moon approve?
I know none else that I can take to me,
Yet now I will dismiss him to his father.
So, if he seeketh throne and signet-ring,
He will not make our coasts the scene of strife."
But Garsíwaz: "O king! treat not so lightly
This grave affair. If he departeth home
He will bring desolation on our coasts,
For when an alien is made a kinsman
He learneth all thy secrets great and small.
A sage once spake a proverb as to this:—
'Domestic storms that burst externally
Will prove but travail and distress to thee,
And dissipate wealth, fame, and family.'
v. 639 Dost thou not know that he who reareth leopards
Will get no recompense but pain and strife?"
Afrásiyáb, when he had mused awhile
And thought that Garsíwaz had spoken rightly,
Repenting of his own advice and conduct,
And owning that his policy had failed,
Thus answered Garsíwaz: "From this affair
I see no good appear in any way.
Let us be patient till the turning sky
Shall make its aspects known. In everything
Delay is better than precipitance;

Wait till the sun hath shone on this awhile;
I shall discern God's purpose, and to whom
The bright cheek of revolving heaven is turned,
And then if I recall him to the court
I shall discover what his secret is.
All will no doubt be clear in course of time,
And if his villainy be manifest,
So that my heart must needs be pitiless,
No one will blame me afterward, for naught
But evil fitly recompenseth evil."

Then vengeful Garsíwaz: "Discerning king,
Whose words are righteous! Siyáwush possesseth
Grace, stature, maces, swords, and god-like hands;
He will not come to court without a host,
But make both sun and moon turn dark to thee.
He is much changed, his crown is raised to heaven,
And Farangís thou wouldst not recognize,
But say: 'This world can give her nothing more.'
Thy troops will all go over to his side,
And when there is no flock there is no shepherd.
An army having seen a king like him,
So generous, so beaming, and so wise,
Thenceforth would never have thee for their king;
The Ram would be his throne and thine the Fish.
Moreover wilt thou call on him to quit
The noble city and the prosperous seat
That he hath built, and bid him: 'Be my slave, V. 640
Content with meanness and obscurity?'
None seeth lions couch with elephants,
Or flames upon the surface of a stream.
If one should take a lion's whelp unsuckled
As yet, should bring it up on milk and sugar,
And nurse it on his bosom constantly,
It will revert to nature when full-grown
And fear no furious elephant's assault."

The monarch's heart was straitened at his words;

He grew despondent, anxious, and distressed,
But judged it best to pause, for prudent men
Win in the end, while those of windy pate
Obtain no praise. A wise man spake this saw :—
"A tempest that hath not been unforeseen
Thou mayst encounter with untroubled mien,
While Feather-brains will be in evil plight
Albeit cypress-tall and men of might."
Unrest and talk went on; their hearts were full
Of vengeance for the wrongs of ancient days,
For ever and anon came Garsíwaz—
The villain full of malice—to the king,
Concocting lying tales of Siyáwush,
And stirring the Túránian monarch's heart,
Until he was possessed by care and vengeance.
One day the king in private conference
With Garsíwaz declared his purposes,
And said: "Thou must go hence. Hold intercourse
With Siyáwush for long, then speak him fairly
From me, and say: 'Thou in thy happy home
Hast no desire to look on any one;
V. 641 But my heart resteth not for love of thee.
Arise! Come hither, thou and Farangís,
Awhile, because we yearn to look upon thee,
With thy shrewd mind so full of excellence.
We too have game upon our hills, we too
Quaff wine and milk in cups of emerald.
Thus let us pass a season and be glad,
And, when thou longest for thy prosperous city,
Go thou with singing and with happiness.
Why are the wine and cup denied to us?
Think not about thy throne of majesty,
But straitly gird thy loins and come to me.'"

§ 49

How Garsíwaz returned to Siyáwush

The crafty, vengeful Garsíwaz made ready.
When he drew near Siyáwushgird he bade
A fluent speaker: "Go to Siyáwush
And say: 'Famed son of an aspiring sire!
By our king's life and head, and by the life,
The head, and royal crown of Sháh Káús,
Leave not thy throne to meet me on the way,
Because thou art so great in dignity,
In fortune, Grace, crown, throne, and lineage,
That every wind should have to gird its loins
To make thee quit that royal dwelling-place.'"
The messenger approaching kissed the ground
And told the words of Garsíwaz; the heart
Of Siyáwush was pained, he sat and mused
Awhile, then said: "Here is some mystery!
I know not what my good friend Garsíwaz
Ḥath said about me to Afrásiyáb."
When Garsíwaz arrived the prince went out
Afoot to him, asked of the king's affairs,
Of throne and crown and host, and Garsíwaz
Then gave the message which made Siyáwush V. 642
Rejoice, and thus he said: "For his dear sake
I would not turn away from swords of steel.
Lo! I will bind my girdle on to go,
And link my rein to thine; but we will tarry
Within this pleasance arabesqued with gold
Three days and hold a revel, for this world
Is fleeting by in pain and toil. Alas
For him whose little life is passed in sorrow!"
Revengeful Garsíwaz writhed when he heard
The prudent prince's words: "If Siyáwush,"
He thought, "departeth with me to the king,

With his astuteness and his lion-strength
The prince will trample on my bow, my words
Will tarnish, and the king will deem my plan
A fraud; I must devise a scheme to urge
The heart of Siyáwush to evil courses."
He fixed an earnest gaze on Siyáwush
In silence, while his eyes shed tears of gall
To further his intent. The prince beheld
Those swimming eyes as of one greatly moved,
And gently said: "My brother! what is this?
Is it a nameless grief, or hath the king
By his unkindness caused thy tears to flow?
Lo! I will go along with thee and fight
Thy battle with the monarch of Túrán,
Will find out why he useth thee so ill,
And treateth thee as his inferior,
While if it is an open enemy
That causeth thee insufferable grief
And trouble, lo! I am thy friend in all,
And will provide thee with the means to fight.
But if the royal favour is bedimmed,
Not by thy fault but through some slanderer's lies,
Or one hath ousted thee, confide in me,
V. 643 That I may make all well, assuage thy griefs,
And purge the monarch of his faults herein."
But Garsíwaz replied: "O man of fame!
It is no question with me of the king,
Nor am I troubled by a foe. My courage
And wealth dispense with schemes. I mused on questions
Of race, and called to mind true tales of old;
The wrong began with Túr who lost the Grace,
And made feud with Íraj, who did not brawl.
Beneath Afrásiyáb and Minúchihr
Túrán hath been like water and Írán
Like fire; they mingled not but broke away

From wisdom's bonds; Afrásiyáb is worse
Than Túr; this wild bull still is in his hide.
In truth thou knowest not his evil moods,
But wait until a little time hath passed.
First judge him by the guiltless Ighríras,
His brother in full blood, whom he destroyed
With his own hand in very wantonness,
While afterward full many a famous man
Was slaughtered by him for no fault at all.
My chief anxiety is now for thee,
For thou art shrewd of heart and stout of frame,
And, since thou camest to our land, hast done
No wrong to any, but adorned the world
With wisdom, seeking right and manliness.
Malignant Áhriman, who parteth hearts,
Hath seared the king's through thee, and it is all
Revenge and grief at thee! God's will I know not, V. 644
But thou dost know me as thy friend, thy partner
In weal and woe, and thou must not suspect
Hereafter that I knew of all this coil.
I therefore tell thee of the monarch's case,
Which it had been a fault in me to hide."
Then Siyáwush: "Have no concern hereat,
The Maker of the world is mine ally;
I did hope otherwise than that the king
Would turn my day to night; had he been wroth
With me he had not raised me over others,
Or given me a province, crown, and throne,
Domain, his daughter, treasure, and a host.
Now will I go with thee to court and make
His dim moon shine again. Where'er truth shineth
The light of falsehood waneth. I will show him
This heart of mine, a heart that doth outshine
The sun in heaven. Be happy then, reject
Suspicion, for whoever suffereth
That dragon's breath departeth from God's way."

But Garsíwaz made answer: "My dear friend!
He is much changed. So long as heaven shall turn
He will be harsh and wear a frowning face.
Not e'en the wisest knoweth of the wiles
That lift on his horizon. Thou thyself,
With all thy learning and thy prudent heart,
Thy towering stature and high purposes,
Discernest not 'twixt artifice and love:
May no ill fortune ever come to thee!
He dealt in charms and spells with thee, and sewed
The eyes of wisdom up by his devices.
V. 645 First, when he named thee son-in-law, thy joy
Was ill advised. Next when he sent thee forth
He made a feast for thee, and called his lords,
In hope that thou wouldst take some liberty,
And give occasion to the world to talk.
Besides thou art not closer unto him
By any ties than prudent Ighríras,
Whom he cut down, and filled the nobles' hearts
With terror. Since his purposes are clear,
Accept the fact; trust not the ties of blood.
Now like the shining sun have I displayed
My thoughts, my trade, and wit. Thou hast rejected
A father in Írán, and in Túrán
Hast builded cities, yielding to the words
And sharing in the troubles of the king.
It is an ill tree that thy hand hath planted,
With poisonous fruit and leaves of colocynth."
He spake deceitfully with running eyes
And sighing lips, while Siyáwush in tears,
Regarding him with wonder, called to mind
His own sad fate that heaven's love should cease,
And that though young his life was well nigh sped.
His heart was pained, his cheeks turned pale, he sighed
In heaviness of soul, and said: "I find not
That I deserve requital for ill done,

For nobody hath heard a fault of mine
In word or deed. Good sooth if I have squandered V. 646
His treasure my heart is wrung at his displeasure,
But come what may I never will transgress
His wishes or commands. Now let me go
With thee, without an escort, and discover
The reason of the anger of the king."
Then Garsíwaz replied: "Aspiring one!
It is not well to go. No need to walk
Thus into fire, or to expose thyself
To breakers; 'tis but rushing into danger,
And sending smiling destiny to sleep;
I surely shall suffice to mediate
And fling cold water on the flames; but write
A letter telling all things fair or foul,
And if I find him free from vengeful thoughts,
And in a lucid interval of good,
I will dispatch a cavalier and make
Thy gloomy counsels bright. I trust in God,
Who knoweth all things, that Afrásiyáb
Will turn to good and shun perverse, bad ways:
But if I find him rash and obstinate
I likewise will dispatch a camel-post
In haste; then make thee ready instantly.
Illustrious monarchs and their realms are near
At hand, it is but six score leagues to Chín,
And only seventeen score to Írán,
Where all are friendly and prepared to serve thee.
On that side too thou hast a yearning father,
A host attached to thee, and loyal cities.
Dispatch a lengthy letter to all parts,
And haste to get thee ready."
Siyáwush
Gave credence to the words of Garsíwaz,
So much was his shrewd intellect asleep,
And answered: "I will do as thou hast said, V. 647

And not transgress thy counsel and advice.
Make intercession for me with the king:
And show me the right course in everything."

§ 50

The Letter of Siyáwush to Afrásiyáb

A ready scribe was called to whom the prince
Gave full instructions. First invoking God—
The Assuager of His servant's grief—he spake
The praise of wisdom, blessed the king, and said:—
"O king victorious and fortunate!
May time ne'er prove thine only monument.
Thou calledst me and I rejoiced thereat:
May thy seat be amongst the archimages.
Moreover thou didst summon Farangís,
And fill her heart with love and loyalty
But Farangís is ailing at this present
With weakness and the loss of appetite,
She cannot rise and will not let me leave
Her side (I see her lying 'twixt two worlds)
Although my heart desired to look on thee,
And thy words gave new lustre to my spirit.
When Farangís is well she shall become
The ransom of the monarch of Túrán;
Her sufferings are also mine excuse,
For I am privy to her pains and griefs."
He gave the letter, when it had been sealed,
At once to evil-natured Garsíwaz,
Who boldly made request for three fleet steeds,
And rode without a halt both day and night.
He traversed in three days the long, hard road
O'er hill and vale, and on the fourth day reached
The monarch's court, a villain bent on ill.
V. 648 Afrásiyáb, on seeing him thus pressed,

And full of hurry, questioned him at large:—
"Why hast thou come in haste," the monarch said,
"Why didst thou make a journey of such length?"
Then Garsíwaz replied: "When fortune loureth
It is not well to put thy trust therein.
Now Siyáwush showed no regard for me,
Nor even came to meet me on the way,
Would hear no words, would not peruse thy letter,
But set me on my knees below his throne.
He had much correspondence with Írán,
And kept his city's portals shut on us.
What with a host from Rúm and one from Chín
There is a constant bruit within the land.
Unless thou actest promptly thou wilt have
Naught left but wind. While thou art hesitating
He will attack thee, and obtain both realms,
For should he lead his army toward Írán
What man would dare come forth to challenge him?
My purpose in forewarning thee is this
That thou mayst suffer by no act of his."

§ 51

How Afrásiyáb came to fight with Siyáwush

Whenas Afrásiyáb had heard these words
The feelings of old days returned to him.
His heart grew full of fire, his head of wind,
He could not answer Garsíwaz for wrath,
But in his fury bade pipes, cymbals, trumpets,
And Indian bells be sounded, and troops summoned.
He flung away the letter all unread,
And, through the words that wicked Garsíwaz
Had spoken, set another tree of feud.
Now, while the guileful Garsíwaz was toiling V. 649
Upon the saddle, Siyáwush in anguish

Went pale and trembling to his ladies' bower.
"Chief of the lion-clutch!" said Farangís,
"Why is thy favour changed?"
"My fair!" he answered,
"Mine honour hath been blackened in Túrán.
I know not how to answer thee, for I
Am all confounded at the case myself;
But, if the words of Garsíwaz be true,
My share is point and not circumference."
Then Farangís plucked at her tresses, rent
With filbert-nails her cheeks of cercis-bloom,
Blood drenched her locks of musky hyacinth,
Her heart was full of fire, her face all tears,
Which fell in showers upon the silver hills.
She bit with pearly teeth her tulip lips,
She tore her hair out by the roots, and wept
For what Afrásiyáb had said and done.
She said to Siyáwush: "O noble king!
What wilt thou do? Make haste to tell me all.
Thy father is enraged, thou durst not speak
About Írán; 'tis longsome hence to Rúm,
And thou wouldst be ashamed to go to Chín.
Whom wilt thou take to be thy refuge now?
Thy refuge is the Lord of sun and moon."
He answered her: "My good friend Garsíwaz
Will come with joyful tidings from the king,
Who surely will forgive through tenderness,
And turn his vengeance into clemency."
He put his trust in God while thus he spake,
But his hard fortune made his heart still ache.

§ 52

How Siyáwush had a Dream

v. 650 For three days Siyáwush wept bitterly
By reason of this treacherous turn of fate.

The fourth night as the prince lay fast asleep,
Clasped to the breast of moon-faced Farangís,
He shuddered, woke in fright, and cried as 'twere
A maddened elephant. The fair one clung
To him, exclaiming: "For love's sake, O king!
What aileth thee?"
When he called out they lit
The lamps and kindled aloe-wood before him,
And ambergris. The lady asked again:—
"O prudent prince! what sawest thou in sleep?"
Then Siyáwush made answer: "Tell not thou
This dream of mine to any of the folk.
My dream was this, O silvern Cypress-tree!
I saw a mighty river stretching far,
And on the further bank a mount in flames;
The river-side was held by men in mail.
On one side was the swiftly rolling fire—
A fire whereby Siyáwushgird was burned.
Here fire, there water, while Afrásiyáb
Stood right before me with his elephants.
He looked upon me with a louring face,
And blew the already fiercely burning flames."
The lady answered him: "It bodeth well,
Unless thou slumberest for this one night."
Then Siyáwush assembled all his guards
And posted them about the court and hall;
He mounted in full armour, sword in hand,
And sent out scouts upon the road to Gang.
Whenas the more part of the night had passed V. 651
There came a scout on horseback from the waste,
Who said: "Afrásiyáb with many troops
Appeareth in the distance, pressing forward."
Then came a messenger from Garsíwaz,
Who said: "Gird up thy loins to save thy life.
My words have proved to be of no avail,
I see black smoke although I see no fire:

Consider now what course thou shouldest take,
And how thou mayest best dispose thy troops."
But Siyáwush, who knew not the design,
Believed in Garsíwaz. Then Farangís
Said: "O wise king! take no account of us,
But mount upon a courser fleet of foot,
And trust not to the country of Túrán.
I fain would see thee in security
Abiding here, but save thyself and flee."

§ 53

The Parting Words of Siyáwush to Farangís

He said to Farangís: "That dream of mine
Hath come to pass: my glory is bedimmed.
For me existence draweth to an end,
The misery of bitter days hath come.
My palace may reach Saturn, yet death's poison
Hath to be drunk; though life should be prolonged
Twelve hundred years dark dust is our last home;
Some are the food of lions, some of vultures
Or eagles. Nobody possessed of wisdom
Expecteth any brightness from the night.
This is the fifth month of thy pregnancy
With our illustrious and growing babe:
This precious Tree of thine will bring forth Fruit,
V. 652 A glorious monarch; name him Kai Khusrau,
And in thy sorrowing find peace in him.
None from the bright sun to the darksome dust,
From gnat's wing to the mighty elephant's foot,
And from the well-spring to the river Nile,
Can scape the justice of All-holy God.
Túránian soil will be my grave, and none
Will say: 'His dust reposeth in Írán.'
May not men call this old world new whose sky

So quickly altereth? My jocund fortune
Will sleep henceforward by the king's command.
They will strike off this guiltless head of mine,
And lay my diadem in my heart's blood.
For me no bier, shroud, grave, or weeping people,
But like a stranger I shall lie in dust,
A trunk beheaded by the scimitar;
While thee, thy head unveiled, thy body bare,
The guards shall drag in shame along the road.
Then will Pírán the chieftain reach the court,
Plead with thy sire to spare thy blameless life,
And bear thee to his palace in thine anguish.
There in the house of that old, honoured man
Wilt thou bring forth illustrious Kai Khusrau,
And there will come a saviour from Írán,
One with his loins girt up by God's command,
Who will convey thee and thy son in haste
Toward the Jíhún. Thy son will have the throne,
And rule o'er fowl and fish. A host will come
For vengeance from Írán and shake the world. V. 653
Such is the process of the fickle sky,
Which cottoneth to no man out of love!
Oh! what a mighty host will don their mail
To vindicate mine honour! Battle-shouts
Will rise, and Kai Khusrau will vex the age;
Then Rustam's Rakhsh will trample earth, despising
Túránian folk, and thou wilt see no vengeance
Ta'en for me till the Resurrection-day
Save by the mace and trenchant scimitar."
The noble hero turned himself to her,
Bade her farewell, and said: "Fair spouse! I go;
Be strengthened by my words, and think no more
Of luxury and throne."
He left the palace,
Heart-broken, pale, lamenting sore. O world!
I wot not why thou nurturest men if they

Whom thou hast nurtured are to be thy prey!
The lady tore her cheeks, plucked out her hair,
Sent two streams pouring from her eyes, and hung
Upon him as he spake the words of woe.
With cheeks and eyes which ran with his heart's blood
He sought the stables of his Arab steeds,
And led forth from its stall night-hued Bihzád,
Which overtook the wind in days of battle.
He groaned, he clasped its head upon his breast,
And took the halter and the headstall off.
Long while he whispered in his charger's ear,
And said: "Be prudent, have to do with none.
When to avenge me Kai Khusrau shall come
It is on thee that he must put the bridle,
So now renounce the stable once for all,
For thou shalt carry him to his revenge.
V. 654 Be thou his charger, trample on the world,
And with thy hoofs sweep foemen from the earth."
He hamstrung all the other steeds and slashed
Their legs like rushes with his scimitar.
As for the riches in the treasury,
His palace, and rose-garden, his brocade,
Dínárs, pearls, jewelry, the diadem,
Sword, belt, and helm, he burned and wasted them.

§ 54

How Siyáwush was taken by Afrásiyáb

This done, he with his chiefs marched toward Írán,
Lost in amazement at his evil fortune,
And with his cheeks suffused by tears of blood
Fared half a league then met Afrásiyáb,
Beheld an armoured host with sword and mace,
And, buckling up his mail, thought: "Garsíwaz
Hath told the truth, a truth too evident!"

Now Siyáwush feared for his life what time
The monarch of Túrán drew nigh. His troops
Partook his fears. The Turkmans occupied
All hills and roads, and each host eyed the other, V. 655
For hate had been a stranger to their hearts.
Through fear of Siyáwush the Turkman horsemen
Sought not to fight but hung back cautiously.
With things at such a pass the Íránians cried
To Siyáwush: "O monarch of the world!
Why should they slay us with impunity
And drag us o'er the plain? Think this no trifle
But let them witness the Íránians' prowess."
Then Siyáwush: "This is not well, for we
Have neither room nor force to fight. To offer
My sovereign battle would disgrace my stock.
The turning sky is bent on my destruction,
Though guiltless, by the hands of wicked men,
And I can make no bold attack to-day,
For none can strive with God. What said the sage,
That man of prudence? 'Brave not adverse fate.'"
Then to Afrásiyáb said Siyáwush:—
"O full of virtues, great and glorious king!
Why hast thou come to battle with thy host?
Why wouldst thou slay me in mine innocence?
Thou wilt embroil the forces of two realms,
And fill the earth and age with malisons."
Said Garsiwaz the insensate: "Do these words
Befit thee? If thou art so innocent
Why hast thou come thus mail-clad to the king?
Men come not to receive their sovereigns
With gifts of bow and mail."
Then Siyáwush
On hearing answered: "Villain! through thy words
I left the right path in my heedlessness.
Thou saidst: 'The monarch is enraged at thee!'
Now guiltless men in thousands will be slaughtered V. 656

Through what thou saidst, but punishment will come
At last. As thou hast sown so shalt thou reap."
Then to the king: "Let not thine anger burn.
It is no jest for thee to shed my blood,
And wage a war against the innocent.
Give not thyself and kingdom to the winds
For what that miscreant Garsíwaz hath said."
But Garsíwaz the double-dealer watched
And, while the prince was speaking to the king,
Grew wroth and cried: "O king! what aileth thee?
Why shouldst thou hold a parley with thy foe?"
Now when the king had heard what Garsíwaz
Had spoken, and it being then broad day,
He bade his soldiers draw their trenchant swords,
And raise a shout like Resurrection-morn;
But Siyáwush, still constant to his pledge,
Put not his hand to sword and javelin,
And let not one of his companions
Advance a foot to battle with the foe.
Malevolent and fell Afrásiyáb
Then wrought upon that chieftain of Írán
Gross outrage, saying: "Give them to the sword,
And float a ship in blood upon the plain."
The Íránian army was a thousand strong,
All men of name and doughty warriors,
Who perished on the field and made the earth
Like tulips with their gore. Amid the mellay
V. 657 The prince fell from his sable steed, sore wounded
By shaft and dart. Gurwí the son of Zira
Bound both his hands, as he was lying senseless,
Behind his back firm as a rock, while others
Placed on his neck a yoke. The blood ran down
Those cheeks of cercis-bloom; he ne'er had seen
A day like that! The executioners
Urged him and dragged him on the road afoot
With troops around him toward Siyáwushgird.

Afrásiyáb commanded, saying: "Take him
Beside the road and let him be beheaded
On some bare spot where grasses never grow,
And pour his blood upon the burning earth.
Let there be no delay and have no fears."
The soldiers said: "What fault hast thou discerned?
Wilt thou not say, O king! how he hath wronged thee
That thou shouldst steep thy hands thus in his blood?
Why wilt thou slay a man for whom the crown
And ivory throne will weep with bitterness?
Plant not in times of happiness a tree
Whose fruitage fortune will convert to bane."
But Garsíwaz, that man of evil note,
Was in his folly on the murderers' side,
And fain would shed the blood of Siyáwush
Through dudgeon ever since the day of contest.[1]
There was a warrior younger than Pírán,
His brother and his noble peer, by name
Pílsam, a bright, accomplished youth, who reasoned
Thus with the king: "The fruitage of this shoot
Is pain and grief. I have heard sages say,
And wisdom too agreeth therewithal:—
'How can deliberation cause regret?'
And: 'Reason is the medicine of the angry.'
And: 'Haste and ill are works of Áhriman— V. 658
Pain and remorse to body and to soul.'
It is not reason to behead thy subject
So recklessly; keep him in bonds till time
Shall give its teaching; when the breath of wisdom
Shall breathe upon thy heart thou mayst behead him,
But give no order now, be not in haste,
For hastiness is rooted in regret.
It is not fit to sever, O wise king!
A head whose covering will be the crown;
And if thou shalt behead a guiltless man,

[1] See § 47.

One whom Káús and Rustam will avenge—
The Sháh's own son whom Rustam hath brought up
And nourished fondly—we shall see the wrong
Revenged, and thou wilt suffer for this day.
Bethink thee of the sword with flashing blade,
The sword whereby the world is filled with blood,
And those famed leaders of the Íránians,
Whose wrath confoundeth earth, as Faríburz,
The son of Kai Káús, the ravening Lion,
Whom none e'er yet saw satiate of fight;
That hero too and snorting Elephant,
Great Rustam, in whose eyes a host is vile.
Then will Gúdarz, Gurgín, Farhád, and Tús
Make fast the drums upon the elephants' backs,
Gird up their loins to take revenge, and fill
The wide champaign with spearmen. I, my peers,
V. 659 And our best warriors cannot countervail.
Good sooth Pírán will come at dawn, the king
Will also hear what he hath got to say,
And seeing that there is no urgency
Dispread not such a carpet of revenge
Upon the world. Enjoin not haste herein,
For it will be the ruin of Túrán."
Afrásiyáb was softened by these words,
But Garsíwaz his brother had no shame,
And said: "Check not thy purpose, man of wisdom!
Because of this youth's talk. The plain is full
Of vultures feeding on the Íránian dead,
And if thou fearest vengeance there is cause.
Should Siyáwush cry out earth would appear
All mace and scimitar from Rúm and Chín.
Hath he not done thee wrong enough that thou
Shouldst listen weakly to what others say?
The snake's tail thou hast crushed and bruised its head;
Now wilt thou deck its body with brocade?

If thou shalt spare his life I will depart
To some retreat and perish."
Then Damúr
Went with Gurwí, both writhing with affright,
Before the monarch of Túrán and said:—
"Mind not the blood of Siyáwush so much,
Because 'tis vile to rest with all to do,
But hearken to the words of Garsíwaz,
The counsellor, and sweep away thy foe.
Since thou hast laid the snare and captured him
Slay him at once, and tarnish not thy glory
Through folly. Holding him is not enough;
'Tis needful that we break our foemen's hearts.
Thou hast destroyed his troops! Mark how the prince
Will now regard thee. Had none injured thee V. 660
Aforetime water could have purged this fault;
Now policy would have him seen no more
At large or in restraint."
The king replied:—
"I have myself beheld no fault in him;
Albeit astrologers declare that ill
Will come to me through him, and if I shed
His blood revenge will raise dust in Túrán
And dim the sun. That day will daze the wise.
Misfortune is upon me and my realm;
Affliction, pain, and bondage are at hand,
Yet freeing him is worse than slaying him,
Though slaying him will cause me pain and anguish."
But neither sage nor villain can make sure
What new expedient heaven may have in store.

§ 55

How Farangís bewailed herself before Afrásiyáb

The news reached Farangís, who tore her cheeks
And came afoot before Afrásiyáb,

Girt with a bloody cord, her moon-like face
Besmirched with blood; she came in fear and trembling,
And, as she scattered dust upon her head,
Exclaimed: "O monarch full of excellence!
Why wilt thou bring me to such misery?
Why hast thou wrapped thy heart up in deceit?
Dost thou not from thy height perceive the abyss?
Take not a monarch's and a guiltless head;
The Judge of sun and moon will disapprove.
When Siyáwush departed from Írán
He did thee homage—thee of all the world—
Gave umbrage to the Sháh, left treasures, crown,
And throne to make thee his support and shelter.
What hast thou seen in him to make thee quit
The path of right? No man beheadeth kings
And long retaineth his own sovereignty.
V. 661 Wrong not my blameless self too, for the world
Is fleeting and is full of sobs and sighs.
One man though crowned it casteth into prison,
One who ne'er had a crown it maketh king;
Yet fate hath laid the grave's grip on them both,
And in the end both lie alike in dust.
Make not thyself a butt to all the world
By listening to malicious Garsíwaz.
Thou knowest well what tyrannous Zahhák,
The Arab, suffered from brave Farídún;
And likewise how both Salm and savage Túr
Fared at the hands of great Sháh Minúchihr.
Now living at the throne of Sháh Káús
Are Zál and Rustam the vindictive one,
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, whose hand is steel
And rendeth lions' hearts and leopards' hides,
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwárán,
Who heedeth not the maces of the valiant,
And Gív, son of Gúdarz, at whom the earth
Is all a-tremble on the day of battle.

In grief for Siyáwush the streams will boil
And heaven will execrate Afrásiyáb.
Herein thou art a tyrant to thyself,
And often will my words recur to thee.
Thou art not casting onagers in sport,
Nor art thou terrifying antelopes,
But plundering a monarch of his throne,
And sun and moon will curse thee. Give not thou
Túrán so madly to the winds, and never V. 662
Mayst thou have reason to recall my words."
She as she spoke caught sight of Siyáwush,
And tore her cheeks with lamentable cries:—
"O king! O brave! O chief! O sovereign!
O lion proud of head! O man of might!
Thou hast left home and country in Írán,
And recognised my father as thy king,
Yet art thou haled afoot with bounden hands!
Where are the crown and throne of high estate,
Where all the royal oaths and covenants
That made the Sun and Moon and Saturn quail?
Where would be Sháh Káús and his proud chiefs
If at this moment they beheld thee thus?
Where are the mighty Rustam, Tús, and Gív,
Zál, Farámarz, and their associates?
The tidings of this wrong will reach Írán
And vex the day of its prosperity.
Ill hath befallen thee through Garsíwaz:
Curse on him, on Gurwí and on Damúr!
He that shall lay a hand on thee for ill,
Be his head smitten off and flung away.
May God vouchsafe to lighten this for thee,
And make thy foes' hearts quake. Would that mine eyes
Were out ere they beheld thee haled like this,
But could I ever deem that mine own sire
Would banish all the sunlight from my breast?"
The monarch heard his child's words and the world

Was blackened in his eyes. He said to her:—
"Begone. What know'st thou of our purposes?"
His heart was all a-fire against his daughter,
He shut the eye of wisdom recklessly.
Within the lofty palace was one chamber
Unknown to her; the monarch bade his guards
To drag her thither, as they would the mad,
And having flung her down inside that room
To bolt the door and leave her in the gloom.

§ 56

How Siyáwush was slain by Gurwí

v. 663 Then Garsíwaz glanced at Gurwí; that villain
Turned round and going up to Siyáwush
Showed no observance and humanity,
But grasping with his hand the prince's beard
Dragged him, O horror! vilely through the dust,
While Siyáwush thus prayed Almighty God:—
"O Thou that art above the change of time!
Cause from my seed an Offshoot to appear,
In all men's eyes as 'twere a shining sun,
Who will avenge me of my foes, maintain
My precedents, exhibit all achievement
And manliness, and reinstate the world."
Pílsam came following Gurwí with tears
Of blood in anguish. "Fare thee well," the prince
Exclaimed. "Be thou the woof and be the world
Thy warp. Farewell Pírán for me and say:—
'The fashion of the world hath changed!' I hoped
Much otherwise of him, for his advice
Was like the breeze and I was like the willow.
He told me: 'I with five score thousand men,
All cavaliers in mail on barded steeds,
Will be thy helper when the day shall come,

Will be thy pasturage at feeding-time.'
Now hurried on in front of Garsíwaz,
Afoot thus in my shame and gloom of soul,
I see no friend or one to wail for me."
When he was past the city and the host
They bore and dragged him bound upon the plain,
And then Gurwí received from Garsíwaz
A blue-steel dagger for the bloody deed.
He dragged the prince on by the hair afoot V. 664
And when he came to where the mark had stood
The day that Siyáwush and Garsíwaz,
That lion-taker, had the shooting-bout,
The son of Zira, villain that he was,
Flung to the ground the mighty Elephant,
And showed no shame or reverence for rank,
But set a golden basin on the ground,
Turned up the prince's face as 'twere a sheep's,
Cut off the silver Cypress' head and filled
The bowl with blood. Gurwí took up the bowl
And emptied it where he had been commanded.
From that blood presently there sprang a plant,
Which I will teach thee how to recognise,
For it is called "The Blood of Siyáwush."
Now when the Sun had left the Cypress-stem,
And when the prince's head had fallen asleep,
(And what a sleep! For how much time hath passed
And he hath never stirred, hath never waked!)
A tempest with a cloud of darksome dust
Arose enveloping the sun and moon,
And no man could discern his neighbour's face.
Then all of them began to curse Gurwí.
I turn me left and right and all around,
But knowledge of this world have I not found.
One man doth much amiss but good alone
Is his, the world and fortune are his own;
Another walketh this earth righteously

Yet withereth away in misery.
V. 665 From every anxious care thy soul release,
And let thy sorrow over this world cease,
For 'tis a fickle thing, not ever sure,
And will be so till time shall be no more.
But this is certain—whatso'er thy lot
May be in this world it abideth not.
A cry rose from the halls of Siyáwush,
For Garsíwaz had filled the world with tumult;
The slaves all rent their hair, and Farangís
Plucked off and bound a long and musky tress
Around her, tore her cheeks of cercis-bloom,
And cursed with tears and shrieks her father's soul,
Who hearing how she wailed and cursed him, said
To Garsíwaz the villain: "Bring her forth,
Drag her outside the curtains by the hair,
And tell the guards and executioners
To take her by the tresses, strip, and beat her,
Until she casteth on Túránian soil
The seed of vengeance, for I will not have
A tree or bough or leaf or crown or throne
Come from his root."
Then all the nobles present
Began to curse Afrásiyáb, and said:—
"From king or minister or warrior
None e'er heard such a sentence!"
With his cheeks
Blood-stained, his spirit seared, his face all tears,
Pílsam approached Lahhák and Farshídward.
V. 666 "E'en Hell is better than Afrásiyáb's
Throne!" he exclaimed. "No rest or sleep for us
In this land! We must hasten to Pírán
In sorrow and concern about the captives."
They put the saddles on three noble steeds:
"They roll the earth before them," thou hadst said.
Now these three horsemen, when they reached Pírán,

Their faces blood-stained and their souls all thorns,
Recounted to him what had come to pass,
And how the ills of fortune had begun.
Pírán, when he had diligently heard
Their words, fell from his throne and swooned away.
He rent his clothes, threw dust upon his head,
Plucked out the hair, and in his bitter anguish
Exclaimed: "Alack! thou worthy of the crown! V. 667
For ivory throne will never see thy like."
Lahhák said: "Haste! oh! haste! or greater grief
Will come, for they have carried Farangís,
Her body all a-quiver like a tree,
Dethroned, disgraced, unrespited, away
To give her over unto those that slay!"

§ 57

How Pírán saved Farangís

Pírán on hearing this cried out in wrath,
Descended to the street and from the stable
Brought forth ten roadsters up to warriors' weight,
And with the brave Rúín and Farshídward
Sent up the dust forthwith.[1] He reached the court
In two days and two nights, there found the deathsmen
About the portal, Farangís bereft
Of all her wits dragged roughly by the guard
With sword in hand, and all the court in uproar;
All hearts were full of grief, all eyes of tears,
All tongues of curses on Afrásiyáb.
The populace—men, women, and young children—
Were talking at the palace-gate and saying:—
"It were a cruel, fearful, shocking deed V. 668
To cut asunder Farangís! This fury

[1] No doubt Pílsam and Lahhák were with them, as the mention of ten horses looks like a re-mount for each man. Rúín was the son of Pírán.

Will wreck the reign and none will call him king
Henceforward."
At that moment came Pírán
Like wind, and all the men of wisdom joyed.
When noble Farangís saw him her cheeks
Were hidden by a flood of tears, she said:—
"Ill hast thou dealt with me! Why hast thou flung me
While living into fire?"
Pírán dropped off
His steed, he rent the raiment that he wore
As paladin, and bade the officers
To hold awhile. He sought Afrásiyáb
In haste, grief-stricken, and with tearful eyes,
To whom he said: "O king! live prosperously,
Be evil's hand afar! What hath occurred,
My gracious king! to turn thy face to ill
To-day? Why hath the foul Dív gained thy heart,
And robbed it of its reverence for God?
Thou hast slain Siyáwush though innocent,
And flung his name and kingship to the dust.
News of this wrong will reach Írán and vex
Our prosperous times, for many a paladin
Will march in anguish and revenge against us.
V. 669 The world reposed from ill, the way of God
Was clear until the wily Dív from Hell
Smote to the heart the monarch of Túrán;
And rightly be that Áhriman accursed,
Who turned thy counsels to an evil course.
Thou wilt repent of this for many a day,
And surely writhe and burn in agony.
I know not whose ill words have prompted this,
Or what the Maker's purpose is herein!
Now, quit of Siyáwush, thou hast ill-treated
Thine own child, and hast madly left thy throne
To make a day of woe! She wisheth not
For fortune, royal state or throne or crown.

Make not thyself a butt to all the world
By what thou doest to thy pregnant child,
Else while thou livest thou wilt be accursed,
And when thou diest Hell will be thy portion.
If now the king would make my spirits bright,
Let him send Farangís to mine abode.
If there be apprehension through this babe,
In truth the trouble and concern are small.
Have patience only till the child is born;
Then will I bring it thee and—do thy worst."
He answered: "Do as thou hast said, for thou
Hast made me cease to wish to shed her blood."
Pírán rejoiced, his heart was eased from fear.
He sought the court-gate, rescued Farangís,
Bestowing many a curse upon the guards,
Then bore her to the country of Khutan,
Unhurt, amid the applause of camp and court.
When he had reached his palace he bespake
Gulshahr: "We needs must harbour this fair dame
Until she hath brought forth her royal babe,
And after that I will devise some scheme.
Meanwhile attend upon her like a slave,
And mark the pranks of fortune."
Time passed by, V. 670
The Moon grew near to her delivery.

§ 58

The Birth of Kai Khusrau

One dark and moonless night, while birds, wild beasts,
And cattle slept, Pírán in dream beheld
A splendour that outshone the sun itself,
While Siyáwush, enthroned and sword in hand,
Called loudly to him, saying: "Rest no more!
Throw off sweet sleep and think of times to come,

For from to-day new feasts and customs date,
Because to-night is born Sháh Kai Khusrau!"
The chieftain roused him from his sweet repose:
Gulshahr the sunny-featured woke. Pírán
Said unto her: "Arise! Betake thyself
To minister to Farangís, for I
Saw Siyáwush in sleep a moment since,
Surpassing both the sun and moon in lustre,
And crying: 'Sleep no more, but join the feast
Of Kai Khusrau, the monarch of the world.'"
Gulshahr came hasting to the Moon and saw
The prince already born; she went with cries
Of joy that made the palace ring again
Back to Pírán the chief. "Thou wouldest say,"
She cried, "that king and Moon are fairly matched!
Oh! hasten and behold a miracle—
The Maker's greatness and His providence—
For thou wilt say: 'The babe hath need of naught
But crown, mail, mace, and lands to devastate.'"
The chieftain visited the royal babe,
And offered many praises to the Almighty
For that tall stature and those arms and neck.
Thou wouldst have said: "The child is twelve months old!"
Pírán's eyes filled with tears for Siyáwush;
He uttered curses on Afrásiyáb,
V. 671 And thus addressed the noble company:—
"Although the king shall break my soul therefor
I will not suffer him to touch the child,
Not though he fling me to the crocodiles!"
When gloomy murk was sleeping, and the sun
Displayed its rays, the captain of the host,
'Twixt fear and hope, went to Afrásiyáb
In haste, but waited till the court had cleared;
Then came anear the famous throne and thus
Addressed the king: "O sunlike sovereign

And world-lord, shrewd and versed in magic arts!
Thy lot last night was bettered by one slave,
'Dowered by the moon,' as thou wouldst say, 'with sense.'
He hath engrossed all beauty: thou wouldst say:—
'It simply is the moon inside the cradle!'
If Túr could have his lifetime o'er again
He would desire to see this infant's face.
None looketh on a picture in a palace
So fair. The royal Grace is fresh in him,
And thou wouldst say: ''Tis valiant Farídún
In Grace and countenance, in hand and foot.'
Now purge thy mind from every thought of ill,
Exalt thy heart, and illustrate the crown."
God gave the king a better mind. He banished
Thoughts of injustice, harshness, and revenge:
His spirit sorrowed for his evil deed.
Then from his heart he heaved a sigh, repenting
Of evil done, and putting by revenge
Replied: "Much evil will befall me now:
That is the gist of everybody's words.
The age will be disquieted by war,
For an adviser hath reminded me
That from the seed of Túr and Kai Kubád
A king of noble birth will lift his head,
The world will seek his love and all men pay V. 672
Him homage in Írán and Túrán.
What is to be will be, no anxious thought
Will aught avail; rear not the child at home,
But send him to the shepherds on the mountains
That he may know me not or why I sent him
To them, not know the truth about his birth,
But be in ignorance of all the past."
He spake upon the matter as he thought,
And deemed this old world young! Canst thou do aught?

There is no remedy. The world is vast,
No hooks or nets of thine will hold it fast;
But if misfortune's ills thou hast to feel
There is instruction also for thy weal.
The paladin went forth with joy, his heart
Full of glad thoughts, began to bless the Maker.
And sing the praises of the infant king;
Then journeyed to his palace musing thus:—
"This little gift—what will it prove to us?"

§ 59

How Pírán entrusted Kai Khusrau to the Shepherds

V. 673 Pírán had shepherds called from Mount Kalúr,
To whom he spake about the infant prince,
Then trusted to their care his Heart and Eyes—
The child that was so good and admirable—
And said: "Entreat him like your souls. No wind
Or dust must see him. Keep him from mischance
E'en at the cost of your own eyes and hearts."
They said: "We will obey."
He furnished them,
And sent a nurse to tend the royal babe;
They laid their fingers on their eyes and heads,
And took the young prince with them to the mountains.
The heavens revolved awhile with matters thus,
And looked upon Khusrau with loving face.
Now when the brave young prince was seven years old
His prowess told the secret of his birth;
He made a bow of wood and string of gut
Looped at both ends, he made an arrow blunt
And featherless, and would go on the plain
To hunt; at ten he was a valiant warrior,
Who fought with boars and wolves, anon with lions
And leopards, armed with that rude weapon only,

And thus he fared until as time went on
His teacher came to ask for fresh directions.
The shepherd left the mountains and the waste,
And came before Pírán with loud complaints:—
"I come complaining to the paladin
Anent this noble Lion running loose:
He hunted antelopes at first, attacked V. 674
No leopards, and avoided lions' tracks,
But now to fight fierce lions is the same
For him as following the antelope,
And yet I must not let him come to harm!
The noble paladin expecteth this
Of me."
Pírán on hearing smiled and said:—
"High birth and excellence will show themselves."
He mounted on an easy-going nag
To seek the sunlike Lion, and observed
The stalwart youth as he approached like wind.
He kissed Pírán upon the hand, who, seeing
Such Grace and such a countenance, shed tears,
And long and lovingly embraced the youth
In secret commune with all-holy God.
Khusrau said: "O thou pure of Faith! mayst thou
Illume the country of Túrán, for all
That know thee call thee friend! Thou dost embrace
A shepherd's son and feelest not ashamed!"
The heart of wise Pírán grew hot, his cheeks
Flushed, he replied: "Thou memory of the great,
So good and yet defrauded of the world!
There is no shepherd that is kin to thee,
And on this matter I have much to tell."
He had an Arab steed brought for the youth,
Clothed him in royal robes and carried him
Home to the palace, thinking mournfully
Of Siyáwush. He cherished Kai Khusrau, V. 675
Rejoiced in him, and spent a happy time,

But lost food, rest, and sleep through tenderness,
And terror of the anger of the king.
With matters thus the heavens turned above
Awhile o'er Kai Khusrau in peace and love.

§ 60

How Pírán brought Kai Khusrau before Afrásiyáb

One night Pírán received a messenger,
Who bade him wait upon Afrásiyáb.
The monarch spake about the past: "My heart,"
He said, "is vexed by thoughts and grief too hard
To put aside; this child of Siyáwush
Hath, so to speak, o'ercast my day; but will
High policy allow a shepherd-swain
To rear one of the race of Farídún?
If ill through this child hath been written for me
No caution will avert it; 'tis God's doing.
But while the child suspecteth not the past
Let him be glad and we too will rejoice;
Still, if he showeth any evil bent,
He, as his father did, must lose his head."
Pírán replied: "O king! thou needest none
To teach thee. This boy is as mad folk are!
What notions can he have about the past?
A child brought up by shepherds on the mountains
Is like wild animals; what can he know?
The foster-father told me yester-night:—
'The boy is comely but devoid of wits.'
In spite of beauty, stature, form, and Grace,
The prince's head yet lacketh understanding;
Vex not thyself and think no more hereof.
What said the sage—a man exceeding wise?
V. 676 'More potent than the sire the nurse will prove,
But the great secret is the mother's love.'

If at this time the king shall order me,
I will present this lauded youth to him,
But make me easy by a promise first
And swear by such an oath as kings employ.
Sháh Farídún, when he affirmed a matter,
Swore by his crown and throne and diadem;
Túr, who enjoyed both fortune and high state,
Swore by the Ruler of the universe;
And that great king Zádsham, thy grandsire, swore
By Him that ruleth Saturn, Mars, and Sun."
The wits of fierce Afrásiyáb were lulled
At hearing this, he swore a royal oath
By white day and by sombre night, by God—
The Omnipotent, the Maker of the world,
The Maker of the sky, the soul, and beasts:—
"No harm shall come upon the boy through me,
And I will never breathe sharp breath on him."
Pírán then kissed the ground and said: "O king,
Who judgest justly and art wed to justice!
Be wisdom evermore thy guide to good,
Be earth and time the dust beneath thy feet."
He came in haste to Kai Khusrau with cheeks
Like cercis-blossom, glad exceedingly,
And said: "Put wisdom from thee. If the king
Shall talk to thee of fight, talk thou of feast.
Appear before him as an alien
And speak insanely, show no kind of sense,
And thus thou mayst perchance outlive the day."
Pírán equipped him with a royal crown
And belt, and called for him a pretty palfrey
Whereon the shrewd, young hero sat and rode
Toward the palace of Afrásiyáb.
Tears filled the eyes of all on his account,
And shouts were raised before him: "Clear the way: V. 677
The brave aspirant to the crown hath come."
When he arrived Pírán the general

Took him before the king. The grandsire's cheeks
Grew wet with tears of shame, meanwhile Pírán
Shook like a willow, fearing for Khusrau.
The king remembering his pledge and spurning
All fell designs, gazed in astonishment
Upon that royal neck, the young man's hands,
His gait, his bearing, and his dignity.
There was a pause. The monarch's face relaxed,
And love at length prevailed within his heart.
"O youthful shepherd!" said Afrásiyáb,
"Describe to me thy life by day and night.
On what wise hast thou shepherded thy flock?
What is the number of thy sheep and goats?"
Khusrau thus answered him: "There is no game:
Besides I have not arrow, bow, or string."
The monarch asked him next about his teacher,
And whether he was prosperous or not.
Khusrau replied: "Where'er there is a leopard
The hearts of valiant warriors are rent."
Afrásiyáb the third time questioned him
About Írán, his parents, and his home.
"The rending lion," thus he made reply,
"Is not o'er-powered by a fighting-dog."
The king said: "Wilt thou go hence to Írán,
To him who is the monarch of the brave?"
Khusrau thus answered him: "Two nights ago
A horseman passed me on the hills and plains."
The monarch smiled and blossomed like a rose,
Then asked of Kai Khusrau in gentler tones:—
"Dost thou not wish to learn to write? Hast thou
No wish for vengeance on thine enemies?"
V. 678 He said: "There is no cream upon the milk:
I fain would drive the shepherds from the plain."
The monarch smiled at what Khusrau had answered,
And turning to the captain of the host
Said thus to him: "The fellow is a fool:

I ask of heads; he answereth of feet!
In sooth no good or ill will come from him:
Of other stuff are they that seek revenge.
Go! Send him by the hand of some good man,
And let his mother have him back to her.
Dispatch him to Siyáwushgird, allow
No evil teachers to resort to him,
But furnish him with treasure, money, steeds,
Attendants, and whate'er may serve his needs."

§ 61

How Kai Khusrau went to Siyáwushgird

"Bestir thyself," Pírán said to the prince,
Then took him from the presence of the king,
And went back to his palace, flushed with joy
And triumph, since the eye of ill was closed.
He said: "A new Tree fruiteth in the world
Through Him that ruleth over destiny."
He oped the portals of his ancient hoards
And furnished all that Kai Khusrau required—
Brocade, dínárs, and precious stones, with pearls,
Steeds, implements of war, and crowns and girdles,
Besides a throne and purses full of drachms,
With carpetings and matters great and small.
He brought them all to Kai Khusrau with speed,
And with the present gave his blessing also,
Then sent both son and mother to the seat
That good king Siyáwush had built. They went
Their way rejoicingly toward the place,
Which had become by then a brake of thorns.
When Farangís and Kai Khusrau arrived
Much folk from every side appeared to greet them,
While all the city's tongues were full of praise:
"Thus then," they said, "hath fortune made a Shoot V. 679
Sprout from the razed roots of a noble Tree!

Far be the eye of evil from the king,
And may light fill the soul of Siyáwush."
The brambles of the city turned to box,
The meadow-grass to noble cypresses;
The very beasts rejoiced and all the folk
Felt solace for the death of Siyáwush,
Since cloudward from the dust that drank his blood
There rose an Evergreen of sweet perfume,
Upon whose leaves his likeness was portrayed,
Exhaling through his love the scent of musk,
And flourishing in winter as in spring
Would be a prayer-place for the sorrowful.
This is the process of the ancient sky—
It robbeth infants of their mother's breast,
And to the dust deposeth suddenly
A heart by fondness for the world possessed.
Brave not the world but seek its joys to win;
It hideth evils more than thou canst know,
Yet treat it as a garden and therein
Abstain from sniffing at the leaves of woe,
For whether thou art king or shod by want
In any case thy length of days is scant.
Vex not thy soul, this home is but a cheat,
Thy sole possession is a narrow bier;
What needeth thine amassing? Sit and eat;
God is thy treasurer, thou need'st not fear.
Albeit here much happiness is found
The world hath no real love for anyone.
'Twill raise a head one moment to the sun,
And in the next will lay it underground.
It is the process of the lofty sky
To bring down princes and set slaves on high.

I turn from blood to vengeance and tell how
Gív bare off from Túrán Sháh Kai Khusrau.

PART V

HOW RUSTAM AVENGED SIYÁWUSH, AND HOW GÍV BROUGHT KAI KHUSRAU TO ÍRÁN

ARGUMENT

The poet, after bewailing the approach of old age, tells of the arrival in Írán of the news of the death of Siyáwush, of the remorse of Kai Káús, and of the wrath of Rustam, who slays Súdába, invades Túrán, expels Afrásiyáb, and rules there himself for seven years; after which he retires to Sístán. Afrásiyáb returns, recovers his authority, and wars with success against Írán.

At this juncture Gúdarz is warned in a dream to have search made for Kai Khusrau, the son of Siyáwush, who is kept as a prisoner of state by Afrásiyáb, and Gív departs on the quest. His adventures are described, and he ultimately returns to Írán in company with Kai Khusrau and his mother Farangís in spite of all the efforts of Pírán and Afrásiyáb to stop them.

Subsequently a quarrel takes place between Gúdarz and Tús as to whether Kai Khusrau or Faríburz shall be associated as joint Sháh with Kai Káús, who puts the matter to the test and Kai Khusrau is successful.

NOTE

The most conspicuous character in this Part is Gív, a word which means "warrior." The feats which he is described as performing would be more than worthy of Rustam himself, who, after his withdrawal from Túrán, is relegated for a time to the background. We must conceive, as the Persians themselves would, that Gív, employed on the sacred mission of discovering and bringing to Írán the destined prince, was favoured with divine assistance in his enterprise.

§ 31. The quarrel between Gúdarz and Tús, as to the respective claims of Kai Khusrau and Faríburz to be associated as Sháh with Kai Káús, bears important results in the next reign. Tús was the

son of Naudar, and he and his brother Gustaham were deliberately passed over after the death of that Sháh, and again after the death of Garshasp, when Kai Kubád was fetched from Mount Alburz to fill the vacant throne.[1] Tús can never forget that he is the direct representative of the line of the Pishdádian Sháhs, and, despairing of ever becoming Sháh himself, he on this occasion attempts to obtain power indirectly by advocating the claims of a candidate of his own.

§§ 34, 35. In the account of the expedition of Faríburz and Kai Khusrau to Ardabíl we have another proof of the truth of the view, often advanced in the present work, that the true seat of the legends of the Sháhnáma is to be looked for in the regions lying between the Euxine and the Caspian. Ardabíl is in Ázarbáiján, a land exposed to invasions from the north through the Pass of Darband, and where the numerous fire-springs doubtless gave rise to the legend of the heat which distressed the host of Faríburz in the neighbourhood of the castle of Bahman.

§ 1

Firdausí's Lament over his old Age

V. 680 When threescore years hang swordlike o'er one's head
Give him not wine, for he is drunk instead
With them! They give to me a staff for reins,
My wealth is squandered and my fortune sped.

The watchman cannot from his hill descry
The countless army of the enemy,
And hath not wit to turn away although
Their spears confront the lashes of his eye.

The runners too that were so fleet of yore
Bend and are bound by pitiless threescore;
The singer is aweary of his song,
And one are bulbul's note and lion's roar.

[1] See vol. i. pp. 369, 381.

Since I took up the cup of fifty-eight,
The grave and shroud, naught else, I contemplate.
Ah! for my swordlike speech when I was thirty,
Those luscious days, musk-scented, roseate!

Drawn by pomegranate-bloom and cypress-bough
The pheasant haunteth not the dog-rose now.
Sufficient respite from my destiny
I ask the Judge Almighty to allow

That from the famous tale of days gone by
I may bequeath the world a history
Such that whoe'er shall judge my work aright
Shall never speak of me but lovingly;

And I that am the Prophet's household-thrall
In dust before his Mandatary fall—
Him of the pulpit and of Zú'lfakar [1]—
On him to plead my cause above I call.

The story of the rustic bard again
I take in hand; heed thou the minstrel's strain.

§ 2

How Káús heard of the Case of Siyáwush

The news reached Sháh Káús: "The prince is slain! V. 681
The monarch of Túrán wrung off his head
As 'twere a bird's! On every mountain-top
Wild beasts lament the guiltless. Bulbuls mourn
Upon the cypress, francolins and pheasants
Beneath the rose. Túrán is seared and sore,
Pomegranate leaves are yellow in the gardens.

[1] *i.e.* "The lord of the vertebrae"—the name of a famous sword taken at the battle of Badar from an infidel by Muhammad, from whom it passed to his son-in-law 'Alí, who is here referred to.

Gurwí set down a golden bowl and raised
As 'twere a sheep's the face of Siyáwush;
They cut his royal head off; there was none
To help or plead."
When Sháh Káús heard this
His crowned head bowed itself upon the state,
He rent his robes, he tore his cheeks, and quitted
His high throne for the dust. The Íránians
Went mourning on their way, the cavaliers
Put on their funeral weeds, their eyes wept blood,
Their cheeks were pale, all spake of Siyáwush.
Tús and Gúdarz, the gallant Gív, Shápúr,
Bahrám the Lion and Farhád arrayed
Themselves in raiment black and blue; no head
Retained its helmet but had dust instead.

§ 3

How Rustam came to Káús

The world-illuming chief heard at Nímrúz:—
"A wail ascendeth from Írán, the death
V. 682 Of Siyáwush hath shocked the world, Káús
Hath thrown dust on his crown and rent his robes!"
When matchless Rustam heard his senses fled;
A wail rose from Zábul, Zál tore his cheeks,
And scattered dust upon his crown and shoulders.
Thus passed a week in heaviness and mourning,
But on the eighth day rose the trumpet-blast,
And at the gate of elephantine Rustam
Troops gathered from Kashmír and from Zábul.
Blood in his eyes and vengeance in his heart
He marched toward the court of Kai Káús.
On coming near Írán he rent his robe
Of office, swearing by the Almighty Judge:—
"I will not rest from arms and war or wash
Dust from my face, whereat we need not grieve,

Till I have taken vengeance for the prince,
And brought our foes' heads to the shears. My crown
Shall be a casque, my cup a scimitar,
My net the leathern lasso on mine arm,
Until I take for our young prince's death
Revenge upon that Turkman dark of soul."
All dust from head to foot he came before V. 683
The throne of Kai Káús and said to him:—
"The noxious weeds that thou hast sown, O king!
Are fruiting now! Thy passion for Súdába,
And thine ill bent, have robbed thee of thy Crown,
And now thou seest clearly that thy seat
Is on the ocean's waves. A heavy loss
Hath come upon Írán through the distrust
And disposition of a cruel Sháh.
For one who is the ruler of people
A shroud is better than a woman's bidding.
A woman's talk hath murdered Siyáwush,
And blest is she who is as yet unborn.
Among the Sháhs there was not one like him, V. 684
As great, as noble, and as reticent.
Alas for that tall stature and that face,
That face that had the mien of majesty!
Alas for that so famous sovereign,
For time will never look on such another!
'Twas ever spring when he was on the throne;
At feasts he used to be the crown of kings,
In fight a Pard, a Tiger, and a Lion:
None ever saw a man so deft of hand.
Now, while I live, I give up heart and brain
To execute revenge for Siyáwush.
Ne'er shall I fight dry-eyed, and like my heart
The whole world shall endure the fiery smart."

§ 4

How Rustam slew Súdába and led forth the Host

Káús perceived on Rustam's countenance
How great his love was by his tears of blood,
And out of shame said nothing in reply,
But poured down scalding tears. The chief departed
And went toward the palace of Súdába.
He dragged her from the bower by her hair,
Dragged her all bleeding from her throne and clave her
Asunder with his dagger in the street
While Sháh Káús sat passive on his throne;
This done, the matchless Rustam felt a pang
Yet keener in his heart, he sought his palace
In pain and woe, with blood-drops in his eyes,
And livid cheeks. Írán was all in mourning,
And people flocked around him in their trouble,
V. 685 While he for seven days in grief and tears
Sat in his palace wrathful and distressed.
Upon the eighth he sounded trump and drum,
And to his palace came Gúdarz and Tús,
Shídúsh, Farhád, Gurgín, Gív, and Ruhhám,
Shápúr, Kharrád the warrior, Faríburz—
The son of Kai Káús—Bahrám the Lion,
And dragon-bold Guráza. Rustam said:—
"I stake heart, soul, and body on revenge,
For in this world there is no man of name
In arms like Siyáwush the cavalier.
Treat not the matter lightly. None can deem
Such vengeance trifling. Banish all dismay,
And make the earth run like Jíhún with blood.
By God! while I am living in the world
I will not cease to grieve for Siyáwush.
On that unwatered waste where rash Gurwí
Poured on the ground the life-blood of the prince

I fain would chafe my face and eyes; perchance
It may relieve my heart of grief for him.
Perchance my hands like his may be secured,
A yoke placed on my neck, and both my wrists
Bound with a twisted lasso, and myself
Thrown like a hapless sheep upon the ground;
But if not, with my trenchant scimitar
And mace will I bring Domesday on the world;
Mine eyes shall see naught but the dust of fight,
And I renounce for life the cup of pleasure."
The chiefs and paladins on hearing this
All shouted like one man: thou wouldst have said:—
"Írán is seething." From the land the uproar
Rose to the clouds. "Earth is a lion's den," V. 686
Thou wouldst have said.
Then from his elephant
He dropped the ball into the cup. The troops
Unsheathed the sword of vengeance. Rose the din
Of horn, of brazen trump, and kettledrum;
The world was all revenge, and thou hadst said:—
"It is a seething sea!" Earth had no room
For walking, air was ambushed by the spears;
The stars began the fray, and time and earth
Washed hands in mischief. The Íránian warriors
Girt up their loins and Kawá's standard led them.
Then Rustam of Zábul chose from Kábul,
Írán, and from the forest of Nárwan,
Troops that were wielders of the scimitar:
There mustered five score thousand men of war.

§ 5

How Farámarz slew Warázád

The leader of the van was Farámarz,
The son of Rustam and a youthful chieftain,

Whom, when he reached the border of Túrán,
The watch descried.
The king of Sipanjáb
Was Warázád, a lustrous Pearl mid chiefs.
Whenas the blast of trump and clarion,
And din of Indian bells came to his ears
He beat the tymbals, marched out to the desert,
And from the desert to a sea of blood.
His troops and scimitars were thirty thousand
Prepared for fight. Advancing from the centre
He made all haste to counter Farámarz,
And questioned him and said: "Who art thou? Speak!
Why hast thou set thy face against this land?
Com'st thou in sooth by order of the Sháh,
Or captain of the host? Dost thou not know
Afrásiyáb, his state, his throne, and crown
v. 687 Of majesty? Be pleased to tell thy name,
For this is thy last fight. Thy swarthy form
May not give up the ghost beneath my hands,
Unnamed."
Then Farámarz: "Ill-fated chief!
The Tree that bare me is a paladin,
In whose hands lions writhe, while elephants
Grow lifeless at his wrath, but as for thee,
Thou ill-conditioned bantling of the Dív!
Why should I talk to thee of how and why?
The elephantine hero is behind
With troops—a foe sufficient anywhere.
He armed to take revenge for Siyáwush,
Advancing like a furious lion. He
Will raise the reek from this vile land. The wind
Will not adventure meddling with his dust."
As soon as Warázád had heard the words
He knew that it was useless to dispute,
And bade the troops: "Lay on; string up your bows."

Both hosts arrayed themselves and donned their helmets,
The war-cry rose, and ears grew deaf with drumming.
Now at the sound of drum and clarion
The heart of Farámarz began to throb.
He came on like a mighty elephant,
With loins girt up and bow upon his arm,
And in a single onslaught overthrew
A thousand warriors, then turning back
With spear in hand he sought for Warázád,
And, when he saw the Turkman leader's flag,
Rushed like a lion from among the troops,
And giving to his sable steed the spur, V. 688
And stiffening the clutch upon his lance,
Struck Warázád a blow upon the girdle,
So that cuirass and buckle brake, and took him
In such a fashion from the poplar saddle
That thou hadst said: "He dealeth with a fly!"
Flung him upon the dust and then dismounting,
While oftentimes invoking Siyáwush,
Cut off the head of his illustrious foe,
Blood-boltering his raiment and exclaiming:—
"See the first head of our revenge! The seed
That hath been scattered sprouteth from the dust!"
They gave up all the country to the flames,
The reek rose to high heaven, and Farámarz
Wrote to his sire respecting Warázád:—
"I opened wide the door of war and vengeance,
I took him from his sell of poplar wood,
Cut off his head, so doth revenge require
For Siyáwush, and set his land a-fire."

§ 6

How Surkha led his Troops to fight with Rustam

A runner came and told Afrásiyáb:—
"The elephantine Rustam hath come forth
To war, the Íránian chieftains are assembled;
They have, alack! beheaded Warázád,
And robbed the marches of Túrán of breath;
His army they have utterly o'erthrown,
And given up his country to the flames."
Afrásiyáb was grieved and called to mind
The ancient prophecy that he had heard
From wise archmages and astrologers;[1]
V. 689 He summoned all the nobles, paid his troops,
Gave largess from his treasures, and brought home
All herds of horses that were on the waste.
He took his minister's and treasurer's keys
To ope his magazines, and furnished swords,
Horse-armour, maces, and artillery,
Dínárs, gold, gems, crowns, torques, and golden belts,
And strewed the palace and the ground with drachms.
With troops equipped and treasure lavished on them
He sounded kettledrum and Indian gong,
And then the horsemen turned their thoughts to war.
He marched from Gang, and, having reached the open,
Called Surkha and spake much of Rustam, saying:—
"Lead thirty thousand Sabres swift as wind
To Sipanjáb, ignoring rest and pleasure,
For Farámarz is there. Send me his head;
But ware the son of Zál! Thou hast no peer
In fight save him, yet where the pard would combat
What will the dog of war avail in battle?
Thou art mine own son and my loyal subject,
The Pillar of mine army and my Moon;
Be so alert and circumspect that none

[1] See p. 234.

Will venture to attack thee. Lead in person,
Be vigilant, and guard the host from Rustam."
When Surkha left the presence of his sire V. 690
He took the troops and standard to the plain,
And marched along like wind to Sipanjáb,
Intent on war. The outposts saw the dust,
Turned round, and hurried in to Farámarz.
The din of drums rose from the Íránian troops,
Whose dust transformed the earth to ebony;
The clamour of the cavaliers and chargers
Rose from the plain, out-topping Sol and Venus;
The bright steel falchions flashed like diamonds,
The spearpoints fed on blood. Thou wouldst have said:—
"An exhalation riseth from the earth,
And giveth fuel to the flames of war."
The earth from end to end was heaped with slain;
Their severed heads were scattered everywhere.
As Surkha marked the progress of the fight
He saw the spearhead of prince Farámarz,
Then gave the rein to his high-crested steed,
And, giving up the bow, charged with the spear,
While Farámarz, abandoning the centre,
Came forth with lance in hand to counter him,
And by a thrust swift as Ázargashasp V. 691
Laid him unseated on his horse's neck,
While with the impetus and that rude shock
The lance was shivered. Then the Turkman chiefs
Advanced intent on battle and revenge,
While Surkha in the anguish of defeat
Fled. Farámarz, like some mad elephant,
Pursued him, brandishing an Indian sword.
The Íránian horse rushed after him like dívs,
And shouted. Farámarz came up with Surkha
And, like a leopard springing, seized his girdle,
Unseated him, and hurled him to the ground,

Then, driving him afoot, brought him to camp,
Disgraced. With that the flag of matchless Rustam
Was seen approaching mid the tramp of troops
And elephants; the prince went to his father
As quick as dust and told of his success.
In front was Surkha with his hands in bonds,
There lay the severed neck of Warázád;
The plain and hollows were all filled with slain,
The foe in full retreat. The soldiers blessed
The brave, young paladin, while peerless Rustam
Gave blessings to him also and bestowed
Great largess on the poor. Of Farámarz
V. 692 Spake elephantine Rustam: "He whose head
Is raised o'er others must have noble nature,
Instruction, prowess, and befriending wisdom:
His nature using these will bring the world
Beneath his feet by virtue of his manhood.
Thou seest naught but brightness in a flame,
Yet he is burned that toucheth. 'Tis not strange
That Farámarz should triumph, for the heart
Of steel is full of fire, and when steel fighteth
With flint the secret of its heart is shown."
Then elephantine Rustam looked on Surkha—
A noble Cypress of the garth was he,
His breast was like a lion's, and his cheeks
Were like the spring, cheeks where black musk was traced
On roses—bade men bear him to the plain,
And executioners with bowl and dagger,
To make his hands fast in the lasso's coils,
To throw him like a sheep upon the ground,
Behead him as was done to Siyáwush,
And let the vultures be his winding-sheet.
When Tús the general heard he went in haste
To do the bloody deed. Then Surkha said:—
"O most exalted king! why slay me guiltless,

For Siyáwush was of my years, my friend?
My soul was full of pain and grief for him,
By day and night my eyes o'erflow with tears;
I ever oped my lips to curse the man
By whom the prince's head was stricken off—
The man that brought the dagger and the bowl."
The heart of Tús was very pitiful
For that illustrious but luckless prince.
He went to Rustam and repeated to him V. 693
The pleading of the Turkman monarch's son,
But Rustam answered: "If there be a king
Who should be thus heart-seared and sad, then may
The heart and spirit of Afrásiyáb
Be ever full of pain, his eyes of tears.
This youth, engendered by those recreant loins,
Will but employ fresh stratagems and guile.
As Siyáwush was laid upon the ground
With shoulders, breast, and hair bedrenched with blood,
So by the head and life of Kai Káús,
The glorious, noble ruler of Írán,
I swear that every Turkman that I find
Throughout my life, be he a king or slave,
So he be of these marches and this folk,
I will behead."
And therewithal that Lion
Looked at Zawára and commanded him
In peremptory tones to do the deed
Of blood. He took the dagger and the bowl,
And gave the youth to executioners,
Who cut his throat—a cry, and all was over.
What wouldst thou, world! with those whom thou hast fed?
Fed! Say thy broken-hearted slaves instead!
Then Rustam took the head off, hung the trunk
Feet upward on a gibbet, and flung dust

In vengeance on the corpse, which afterwards
The soldiers hacked to pieces with their swords.

§ 7

How Afrásiyáb led forth the Host to avenge his Son

When the Túránian troops returned from battle,
Their bodies bloody and their heads all dust,
They said: "The noble chieftain hath been slain,
His eager fortune hath been overturned,
And they have set his severed head and body
Blood-boltered upside down upon a gibbet!
The people of Írán are all in arms,
Their hearts ache with revenge for Siyáwush."
Afrásiyáb hung down his head and crown,
Plucked out his hair, shed tears, and rent his robes,
v. 694 Cast dust upon his head, and cried aloud:—
"O prince! O gallant heart! O warrior!
O chief! O man of name! O hero! King!
Woe for that moonlike cheek of cercis-bloom!
Woe for that royal breast and mien and stature!
Thy sire shall ne'er seek rest unless it be
Upon his charger's saddle on the field."
Then to his men: "Our ease and feasts are over.
Keep ye your eyes wide open for revenge,
And make your jerkin and cuirass your bed."
Rose at his gate the din of kettledrums:
His warriors armed. Upon the elephants
The trumpets blared, the world was like a sea
Of indigo, and when they bound the drums
Upon the elephants heaven kissed the earth.
Then said the king: "Ye chiefs and warriors!
When both sides sound the drum he is no soldier
That laggeth. Let our hearts be full of vengeance,
Full as the bodies of our foes with javelins!"

Thus spake he to the troops, then bade to sound
The clarions, cymbals, and the Indian bells.
Arose the war-cry and the blare of trumpets,
The din of cornet, pipe, and kettledrum,
Earth shook beneath the trampling of the steeds,
The shoutings of the soldiers reached the clouds.
Now when that army's dust rose from the plain
One came to vengeful Rustam and spake thus:—
"Afrásiyáb the chieftain is at hand;
His troops move like a vessel o'er the sea.
All have prepared for combat and revenge,
And set their hands to blood."
Now when he heard:—
"The monarch of Túrán hath come in sight,"
The troops marched forth with Káwa's flag; the air
Turned blue with warriors' swords; a shout arose
From both sides and the world was filled with fighters. V. 695
Thou wouldst have said: "The sun and moon are darkened,
A crocodile hath swallowed up the stars!"
The monarch of Túrán arrayed his men,
Who grasped their maces and two-headed darts.
Upon the right Bármán came proudly on
Before his troops, Kuhram was at the left,
And in the centre was the king in person.
On his side Rustam too arrayed his host,
And earth was lost in dust. He took the centre
With Farámarz in front and in the rear
Zawára; on the left he placed Gúdarz,
Hajír, and other chiefs. He stationed Gív,
And Tús—those wary horsemen—on the right
With trump and drum, then armed himself for battle,
And eased his heart by vengeance. Earth became
Musk-black with troops, air like a leopard's back
With spears. "It is an iron mount whose crest
Is full," thou wouldst have said, "of helms and mail."

The staff-heads of the banners rose towards
The clouds, and brightly flashed the blue-steel swords.

§ 8

How Pílsam was slain by Rustam

Pílsam with angry looks and vengeful heart
Came to the centre to Afrásiyáb,
And said: "O full of wisdom, famous king!
V. 696 Unless thou here forbiddest me the use
Of charger, helmet, falchion, and cuirass
I will myself to-day encounter Rustam,
And cover all his name with infamy,
Will bring to thee his head, his steed, his mace,
And world-apportioning sword."
. The king rejoiced
Thereat and raised his spearpoint o'er the sun,
Then answered: "O thou Lion of renown!
In sooth no elephant will conquer thee.
If thou dost take that elephantine chief
The age will rest from strife, and not a man
Within Túrán shall equal thee in rank,
In throne, in signet-ring, in crown, and sword.
Thou wilt exalt my head to turning heaven,
And I will give to thee my crown and daughter;
The more part of Írán and of Túrán
With treasures, gems, and cities shall be thine."
Pírán was grieved and, coming to the king,
Said to him: "This young man in his rash youth
Is laying violent hands upon himself,
For, if he combat with the matchless Rustam,
He will but lay his own head in the dust.
The king will share in his disgrace, 'twill break
The spirit of the troops; he is, thou knowest,
My younger brother, and my love for him

Is greater than an elder brother's love."
Pílsam rejoined: "My heart doth not misgive me,
And, if I fight this warlike Crocodile,
By thy good fortune I will bring no shame
Upon the king. Thou once beheld'st my prowess
In fighting with four famous warriors,[1]
And verily my strength is greater now.
It is not right of thee to break my spirit;
The enterprise is well within my reach:
Haunt not the portal of an evil star."
The monarch, hearing what Pílsam replied,
Gave him a barded charger, helm, cuirass, V. 697
A sword, and massive mace. Pílsam made ready,
And lionlike impetuously advanced,
Exclaiming to the Íránians: "Where is Rustam,
Who is, they say, a Dragon on the day
Of battle? Bid him come to fight with me,
For I am ready to encounter him."
Gív, furious at the challenge, drew his sword
And answered: "Rustam fighteth not one Turkman,
'Twould be disgrace."
The champions closed. Pílsam
Struck with his spear at Gív, who in dismay
Lost both his stirrups. Farámarz saw this,
And went at once to aid his gallant comrade;
He struck athwart Pílsam's spear with his sword,
And cut it like a reed; he struck once more,
The blade was shivered on his foeman's helm,
Who wheeled like some fierce lion on the plain
With those two warriors. Rustam from the centre
Espied them fighting with one lion-man,
The dust sent cloud-ward with their wind-like speed,
And thought: "Pílsam alone among the Turkmans
Hath dash and spirit." He had heard moreover
From hoar archmages and astrologers,

[1] See p. 112.

Amid his wanderings, how the stars foretold
That: "If Pílsam survive his evil day,
And heed his counsellors, no warrior
Like him in all the world shall gird his loins
For battle in Írán or in Túrán,"
V. 698 And thought: "Assuredly his time hath come,
For he hath set forth to encounter me."
He spake thus to his troops: "Let none advance
A single step from where he standeth now.
I go to prove the prowess of Pílsam,
And try his lustihood, his strength, and spirit."
He took a weighty spear, gripped fast his steed
With both his legs, and, putting on his helmet,
Pressed on the stirrups, let the reins hang loose,
And lowered the shining spear-head to his eye.
He wheeled about and foaming at the lips
Rushed from the centre toward the foemen's lines,
And cried: "O famed Pílsam! thou called'st me
To scorch me with thy breath! Thou shalt behold
The onslaught of the warrior-crocodile,
And ne'er turn rein toward a battle more.
My heart is burned with pity for thy youth:
Alas for thine estate of paladin!"
He spake and urged his charger on. He came
To battle like high heaven. With his spear
He smote Pílsam upon the girdlestead,
And took him from the saddle like a ball,
Rushed to the centre of the Turkman host
And there flung down the corpse contemptuously,
Exclaiming: "Dress it in brocade of gold,
For now 'tis lapislazuli with dust!"
Then wheeling round he went back to the centre.
Pírán rained tears; the body of Pílsam
Was past a leech's skill. The heart of all
The army of the monarch of Túrán
Was broken and the battlefield was darkened.

A shout rose from both hosts; the din of chiefs V. 699
Keen for the fray, the drumming on the backs
Of elephants, were heard for miles around.
Earth trembled with the chargers' tramp, the hills
Were seas of blood, the plains were hills of slain.
The cries and blaring clarions shook the sky,
The stones were coral and the dust was gore;
The heads of many chieftains were laid low,
And thou hadst said: "The sky is raining blood."
It was no time for love 'twixt sire and son.
A breeze arose upon the battlefield,
And murky dust usurped the firmament.
Then both hosts charged with fury o'er the plain
While neither could distinguish foe from friend;
The world became as sombre as the night,
And day in sooth had well nigh spent its light.

§ 9

How Afrásiyáb fled from Rustam

Afrásiyáb said to his troops: "Our fortune
That was awake is sleeping. Ye are feeble,
And I must to the field. Be leopard-like
In resolution if but for to-day,
Attack from every quarter and fight on.
Lay ambuscades on all sides for the foe,
And bring the sun down with your spears."
He quitted
The centre of his host, heart-seared, revengeful,
Charged Tús and slaughtered many of Írán
Till Tús, whose heart misgave him, showed his back.
One came for aid to Rustam saying thus:—
"The matter goeth ill with us to-day:
Our whole right is a sea of blood, the banner
Of our Íránian horsemen hath gone down."

Came elephantine Rustam from the centre
With Farámarz and troops. Confronting them
V. 700 Were many buckler-men who hated Rustam,
Allies and kinsmen of Afrásiyáb,
Swift in revenge, of whom the matchless one
Slew many, backed by Tús and Farámarz.
Afrásiyáb, when he beheld the flag
Of violet and Káwa's standard, knew:—
"'Tis Rustam of the elephantine form,
The noble chieftain sprung from Narímán,"
And raging as it were a warrior-leopard,
Sat tight and went up to encounter him.
As soon as Rustam saw the sable flag
He bounded like a lion in its rage,
Then full of fury gave fleet Rakhsh the reins
And, with blood streaming from his lance's point,
Encountered proud Afrásiyáb. One shaft
Of poplar, pointed like a willow-leaf,
Pinned to his head the Turkman's helm, while he
Speared warlike Rustam full upon the breast,
The point went through the leather of his belt
But failed against the tiger-skin cuirass;
Then matchless Rustam, bent upon revenge,
Speared his opponent's charger through the chest.
The speedy steed fell prone in agony
And threw the rider, whom the hero strove
To seize around the waist and make an end.
Húmán apart caught sight of him and, raising
His massive mace upon his shoulder, smote
The shoulder-blade of elephantine Rustam,
While both the armies shouted. Rustam turned
And looked behind him, thus the king escaped
His grasp, and mounted on a speedy steed,
While by a hundred shifts Húmán, the son
Of Wísa, saved him from that Dragon's clutch.
V. 701 The hero-flinging crown-bestower followed

Húmán in furious haste but caught him not,
His time had not yet come. Shouts rose to heaven,
And massive maces whirled. There came to Rustam
Some of the army of Írán lest harm
Might fall upon him, and the noble Tús
Made question of him: "Felt the Elephant
The impact of the Onager's assault?"
He answered: "Neither heart of stone nor anvil
Can bear the buffets of a massive mace
When wielded by a man with chest and arms;
As for that mace wherewith Húmán struck me—
Call it not iron; it was merely wax."
When Rustam's foeman turned and fled the troops
All gave a shout and raised their spearheads cloudward.
If slain and wounded covered not the ground
It was a field of tulips and of saffron;
The horses trampled blood, the elephants
Had feet incarnadined. The Turkmans fled,
Swift as the wind, because the arm of Rustam
Did execution on them. For three leagues
That matchless hero like a raging dragon
Pursued the foe. Then he returned to camp,
And thou hadst said that heaven befriended him;
The soldiers came back satiate with spoil;
And iron, gold, and silver, weapon, rein,
Spearhead, and girdle covered all the plain.

§ 10

How Afrásiyáb sent Khusrau to Khutan

Now when the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops,
And scattered jewels on night's pitchy back,
A shout rose and the din of clarions
As matchless Rustam led his army forth.
They marched against Afrásiyáb with cheeks V. 702

All tearful for the death of Siyáwush.
The king, on hearing that a host pursued him,
Led by the matchless chief intent on vengeance,
Marched his own forces to the sea of Chín;
The broad expanse of earth was narrowed to him.
He went across the sea to where he would,
And thus addressed Pírán: "Advise me well
What should be done about this wretched boy;
Because if Rustam take and carry him
Off to Írán, they will enthrone and crown
This dív-begotten as Sháh. Convey him hither,
Bestir thyself, and slight not my command."
Pírán replied: "We must not rashly slay him,
But I will take such order that the king
Shall praise his faithful slave. Fetch we the youth,
And fix his residence within Khutan.
We must not give occasion to ill-doers
Eternally to blame our sovereign."
The king replied: "O master of wise rede!
Thou art my guide to good. Use all dispatch;
'Tis not a matter that will brook delay."
Pírán at once sent off a prudent man
Of noble birth to fetch the prince. The envoy
Made haste and sped like smoke, for so the chieftain
Had bidden. When he came before Khusrau,
And saw the young man's Grace and majesty,
He gave unstinted praise, did reverence,
And tarried long delivering his message
In fitting language fittingly received.
V. 703 Khusrau, bewildered, sped to tell his mother:—
"Afrásiyáb hath sent and summoned me
Down to the sea! What shall we do? Perchance
We yet may make a shift to save our lives."
They talked together and discussed it much,
But found no remedy. They had to go,
And set off, though unwillingly, in haste.

They mourned and wept and cursed Afrásiyáb
Until they reached Pírán, who, when he saw
Khusrau, descended from his throne, inquired
About the tedious journey courteously,
And full of praises set the prince beside him.
As for those things whereof Khusrau had need,
Provisions, raiment, carpetings, pavilions,
Tents, steeds, Pírán provided him with all,
Then went to king Afrásiyáb and said:—
"O king of wisdom, Grace, and glory! I
Have brought the little boy that hath the Grace;
What further orders hast thou for me now?"
The king said: "Send him from the sea of Chín
So that the chiefs may find no trace of him."
Pírán performed his task without delay,
And sent like smoke the youth upon his way.[1]

§ 11

How Rustam reigned over Túrán for Seven Years

The chief, the elephantine hero, marched
Toward the realm of Chín, and with his sword-arm
Subdued Khatá, Khutan, and all the coasts V. 704
Of Chín, and took the throne of him whose fortune
Had come to dust. This saw spake Rustam first:—
"The man of worth will seek the enemy;
'Tis good to slay him if he countereth thee,
And good too if he shun the fight and flee."
He searched the palace for its hoards; the people
Disclosed them all. The slaves, both boys and girls
Famed for their beauty, steeds, and treasuries
Of gold, crowns, robes, brocade, and ivory throne,
Fell into Rustam's hand, with many a jewel
Out of the hoards at Gang, and all the soldiers
Were rich in armlets, torques, and coronets.

[1] Kai Khusrau was sent to Máchín (China). See p. 370.

He gave torques, armlets, and the ivory throne
To Tús, besides the government of Chách,
And said: "If anybody shall revolt,
Or even call Afrásiyáb to mind,
Cut off his head and make him food for vultures;
But like a father keep from want and travail
The wise and peaceful, shunners of the Faith
Of Áhriman. Offend not the offenceless,
And practise all humanity and justice,
For this world is a lodging not a home.
None ever had more Grace than had Jamshíd,
Yet still high heaven trod him under foot,
And found the world a monarch in his stead."
Next, to the worthy, pious paladin
Gúdarz he gave a crown of royal gems,
With earrings, torque, and throne, and made him lord
Of Sughd and Sipanjáb; he added counsel
With commendations and felicitations,
V. 705 And said: "The seal of majesty and justice,
And feast and fight remind us still of thee;
But worth is better than high lineage,
Though lineage assisteth men of worth.
Since thou hast worth and lineage and wisdom,
And mak'st thy soul a concourse of sweet sounds,
It is but right that thou shouldst hear my rede,
Who art thyself a teacher of the great.
From Sipanjáb to the Gulzaryún
Be thy word law."
To Faríburz he sent
A crown of gold beside dínárs and gems,
And said: "Thou art a prince and potentate,
And brother unto Siyáwush; avenge him!
Ne'er loose thy lasso from the saddle-straps,
Cease not from vengeance on Afrásiyáb,
And take no thought of food, repose, and sleep.

Be just in all thy doings here below,
For justice never ruined any one."
The tidings spread through Chín that Rustam sat
Enthroned as over-lord. Then all the folk
Brought handsel of dínárs and royal gems,
And said: "We are thy servants and thy slaves;
We only tread the earth to do thy bidding."
The chieftain gave them quarter for their lives,
Perceiving that they had discerning minds,
And occupied himself for many a day
With hawk and cheetah. Passed a while away.

§ 12

How Zawára went to the Hunting-ground of Siyáwush

Now as it chanced one day Zawára went
To hunt the onager. He rode apace
Conducted by a Turkman. On the open
He saw a forest, "which," thou wouldest say,
"One cannot pass, it fresheneth the soul,"
So many were the scents and tints and streams. V. 706
The Turkman told Zawára thoughtlessly:—
"This was the hunting-ground of Siyáwush,
This was his favourite spot in all Túrán,
Where was he wont to be both glad and merry,
But elsewhere sad."
The Turkman's talk recalled
Old recollections to Zawára's mind.
A hawk was on his hand; he let it go;
The lashes of his eyes ran tears of blood.
His comrades of the host approached, observed him
In grief and tears; then they began to curse
The Turkman guide and felled him to the ground.
With gall-drops streaming from his eyes Zawára
Swore a great oath: "I will not hunt or sleep,

Or cease from vengeance on Afrásiyáb.
I will not give a moment's rest to Rustam:
All must prepare for fight."
He sought his brother.
"Did we come hither to revenge or bless?"
He said. "The Giver of all good hath given
Thee strength and made the circle of the sun
Thy star. Why should this realm be populous,
Or any soul live joyfully therein?
Forget not to avenge that prince, whose peer
Thou wilt not look upon for many a year."

§ 13

How Rustam harried the Land of Túrán

Roused by Zawára's words the matchless Rustam
V. 707 Began to ravage and to massacre
Till all the land showed signs of misery,
And from Túrán up to Sakláb and Rúm
Folk saw no cultured tract. The Íránians
Beheaded all the men, both young and old,
And made the women and the children slaves.
Thus o'er a thousand leagues and more the reek
Of burning rose. Then all of noble race
Came with the dust upon their heads protesting:—
"We are aweary of Afrásiyáb,
And would not see him even in a dream.
As for the guiltless blood that he hath shed,
We had not any voice or part therein,
And now, although we are a scattered people,
Yet are we all thy slaves. As thou art mighty
Shed not, provoking God, more guiltless blood.
None knoweth where our king is, or if he
Is well or blasted by the dragon's breath."
The prudent Rustam's heart was grieved thereat,

He summoned all the chieftains of the host,
And marched the army to Káchár Báshí.
The wise, the great men, and the veteran chiefs
Flocked to his presence, and one said: "Káús,
Who hath not Grace, and cannot soar or stand,
Is seated on the throne without a guide,
And if Afrásiyáb should suddenly
Come with an army to invade Írán,
And conquer old Káús, our joy and peace
Would be destroyed. We all have won both honour
And vengeance, and have burned up every city.
Now let us go back to the agéd king;
When feasts begin we shall be all new men.
For six years we have had not one glad day;
Our slaves, our states, our signets, and our crowns
Are in Írán. 'Tis wealth hath dazed us thus! V. 708
Heart sated is soul bated! If thou settest
Thy heart upon this ancient dwelling-place
'Twill flatter thee but cozen thee withal;
So, if thy heart be not with Áhriman,
Abstain from greed which is the enemy.
Array thyself and lavish, drink and eat,
Such is thy portion of this fleeting show."
The matchless Rustam yielded his assent
To what the noble archimage had urged.
That jocund counsellor went on to say:—
"Choose pleasure in this Wayside Inn. Reflect
That in the dust there is no brotherhood,
And how thou wilt deplore this present good!"

§ 14

How Rustam returned to Írán

The matchless Rustam heard the words with shame,
And felt an ardent longing to depart.
He gathered horses out of all the herds

That wandered o'er the deserts of Túrán,
Together with ten thousand boys and girls—
Slaves fit to serve a king—with bags of musk,
With skins of marten, ermine, and grey squirrel,
Of minever and weasel. On the backs
Of elephants were furs, perfumes, dínárs,
Gold, tapestries, and havings great and small,
Stuffs for apparel, treasures, drachms, and swords,
As well as other weapons, crowns, and thrones.
They packed the loads, set forward to Írán,
And, going from Túrán toward Zábul,
Drew near to glorious Zál, while Tús, Gúdarz,
And Gív, those famous chiefs, went to the Sháh
At Párs.

When news reached base Afrásiyáb
That Tús and Rustam were across the river
V. 709 He set off westward toward the sea of Gang,
With vengeance in his heart intent on war.
He found the country all turned upside down,
The nobles slaughtered and the folk enslaved;
No horses, treasures, crowns, or thrones were there,
There was no verdant leafage on the trees;
The world had been consumed with fire, and all
The palaces had been o'erthrown and burned.
The king wept tears of blood and thus harangued
The captains of the host: "A man must lose
His reason to forget these outrages!
Fill all your hearts with vengeance, make your shields
Your beds, your helmets pillows, let us fight
Till heaven itself shall fall in our revenge;
For country's sake, for treasure, child, and kin,
We will tread down the cities of Írán
In striving after vengeance; 'tis not well
To be thus downcast just because the wind
Was in their favour in a single fight.
From all sides will we gather arms and troops,

And make a new departure."
He assembled
Without delay a host equipped for war,
And led his warriors and lion-men
Against Írán. His plan was to attack
From every side. No respite was afforded,
He burned up all the settlements and trees,
And brought the Íránians to a parlous case.
For seven years there was a rainless sky,
The favour changed, conditions were reversed,
And all were beggared by distress and travail. V. 710
Much time elapsed with matters in this stay
While at Zábul the mighty Rustam lay,
And Turkman sworders in the world held sway.

§ 15

How Gúdarz had a Dream of Kai Khusrau

Gúdarz one night dreamed that a watery cloud [1]
Rose o'er Írán, and on it sat Surúsh,
Who thus addressed him: "Give to me thine ear
As thou wouldst be released from this distress,
From this injurious Turkman dragon-fierce.
There is a youthful prince now in Túrán,
Sháh Kai Khusrau by name. He is a prince,
The offspring of the loins of Siyáwush,
A man of worship and of noble race,
Illustrious, of the stock of Kai Kubád,
And sprung from Túr upon the mother's side.
Whenas his glorious feet shall reach Írán
Heaven will accord to him his full desire.
Then will he gird him to avenge his father,
Will overturn the sovereignty of Túr,

[1] An emblem of coming prosperity in a land where rain is the chief want.

Will make the waters of the Red Sea boil,
Pause not in vengeance on Afrásiyáb,
But live in his cuirass the whole year through,
And pass his days and nights upon the saddle.
Among the chiefs and warriors of Írán
None will discover him excepting Gív:
Such is the outcome destined by the sky.
On Gív the Judge hath rightly lavished love."
Gúdarz awoke and, with his hoary beard
Upon the ground, gave thanks to God: his heart
Was hopeful of a Sháh to rule the world.
Now when the sun appeared above the dales,
Ascending as it were a shining lamp,
The chieftain sat upon his ivory throne,
And furnished forth the hall with seats of teak.
V. 711 Fulfilled by anxious thought he summoned Gív
And told him of the dream in many words,
Thus saying: "Glorious are thy feet and days,
And glorious is thy world-illuming star;
Since thy blest mother bare thee earth hath been
Fulfilled with blessings. Blest Surúsh appeared
Last night to me in sleep by God's command.
He sat upon a cloud mid wind and rain,
And purged the world of woe. He looked at me
And said: 'Why all this grief? Why is the world
Thus filled with warfare and thus parched with drought?
Because Káús hath neither Grace nor might,
And heedeth not the precedents of Sháhs.
When Kai Khusrau arriveth from Túrán
He will bring war and trouble on the foe;
But none of all the valiant chiefs can find him
Save Gív, the famous offspring of Gúdarz.'
Thus heaven hath ordained thee to remove
Our sorrow, toil, and bondage. Thou hast sought
For fame in war, and now eternal fame
Is in thy reach, for, while the world hath men

And words, thy good name will continue fresh.
'Twill be a toil, but one with fame and treasure,
A toil which surely will exalt thy fame;
And, since thou wilt not tarry here for ever,
That fame is better than this Wayside Inn,
For thou wilt bring a monarch to the world,
And cause the tree of fealty to fruit."
Gív answered: "Father! I am but a slave;
For thy sake will I labour while I live.
If this may be I will accomplish it:
By thy great name I swear it, O my guide!"
He went home and prepared for setting forth,
Lost in amazement at his father's dream.
The spouse of Gív was of exalted rank— V. 712
The well-loved daughter of the hero Rustam—
Bánúgashasp. News reached her that Gív's steed
Was being saddled for his expedition.
She went to him and said: "Aspiring chief!
I hear that thou art going to Túrán
To seek both far and near for Kai Khusrau;
So, if the paladin will give me leave,
I will betake me joyfully to Rustam,
Because I long to look upon his face,
And through not seeing him my soul is sad.
Farewell to thee, O chief of paladins!
Mayst thou for ever be our heroes' stay."
The chieftain having given his consent,
Toward Sístán with speed the lady went.

§ 16

How Gív went to Túrán in Quest of Kai Khusrau

At sunrise, when the earth resembled flowers
Of fenugreek, the gallant Gív approached
With girded loins, upon a steed with feet

As swift as wind. Gúdarz inquired of him:—
"What comrade hast thou? Who will fare with thee?"
He thus replied: "O chief of paladins,
Brave, ardent, and exalted! I have need
Of no companions save my horse and lasso.
Suspicion will be roused if I take men,
And I shall bring a quarrel on myself.
A lasso in the straps, a rapid steed,
A sword and Indian vesture are enough,
Unless perhaps a guide to lead the way.
My home awhile will be the plain and mountain,
I may not pass through cities, for the folk
Will recognise me and I shall repent it.
I shall return rejoicing, bright of soul,
Through thy good fortune, chief of paladins!
Tend heedfully my little son Bízhan[1]
And guard him carefully against mischance,
V. 713 Give him instruction in the art of war,
He need learn nothing but to feast and fight;
Young as he is I note his manliness
With satisfaction. Fare well. Think of me
Without anxiety. I cannot tell
If we shall meet again. The secret things
Of God who knoweth? When thy cheeks are bathed
For prayer entreat the Lord on mine account,
For He is higher than all height; the mighty
Are but His slaves. This day revolveth not
Without His will; there is no food or sleep
Save at His word. He made both time and space,
The mighty and the weak. He is our hope
And fear, the Lord of all the elements,
And oh! may He vouchsafe to be my Helper,
And guide me to illustrious Khusrau."
The father hoary-headed, while the youth

[1] The first mention of this famous hero who is an especial favourite of the poet's.

Fierce as a lion girded up his loins,
Knew not if he should see his son again,
And was distracted at his setting out.
The gallant Gív dismounted from his steed,
And kissed the hand of that exalted Lion,
Who clasped him tightly in a fond embrace,
And kissed him oft upon the face and head.
That ancient man cried unto God: "Just Judge!
Be Thou my Helper. To Thy care I leave
Him who is sense and soul and life to me—
My son so noble and so young—that haply
The realm may be delivered from this stress.
Restore him to me safely, O my King!"
Those in the world who toil laboriously,
And win applause because their aims are high,
Must make the dust their bed when all is done; V. 714
That is their bane, and antidote is none.
Thy sojourn here, thou knowest, is soon sped,
Why set the crown of greed upon thy head?
Canst thou still wear it after thou art dead?
In this world ample pleasure thou canst take,
Why art thou toiling for another's sake?
Thou toilest and another will consume
At ease, unmindful of thy bier and tomb,
But for him also pleasure hath its bound,
And his head too must pass beneath the ground.
Think then upon the day when thou must go,
And make it thine to serve God here below,
Incline to good and do to no man scath,
For, in a word, this is Salvation's path.
Upon this world that whirleth set no store,
It will not last with thee for evermore.
Long though thou stayest thou wilt reach the bourne
And, having reached it, there is no return.
So now thou sage, whose heart is wakeful! cease
From doubt, and from the mire thy foot release.

'Tis God Almighty that sustaineth thee,
His servant thou and thy Creator He.
Although thou weighest down thy neck with thought,
Of His existence ask and question naught,
And if by any it be not confest
With such thou shalt not eat or sleep or rest,
Because their heads are witless, their hearts blind,
And wise men count not such among mankind.
Both earth and water of God's being tell,
Let not thy knowledge prove thy way to Hell,
For His are power and knowledge and control,
The Artist He of wisdom and the soul.
V. 715 When mused the monarch of Túrán and said:—
"Above all people will I lift my head,"
And slew a youth so royal, then was he
Confronted by his evil destiny.
Howbeit from his loins God caused to shoot
A Tree[1] of noble height and yielding fruit,
A Tree that dealing with him as was just
Sent both his wits and palace up in dust.
The Lord of Saturn, Sun, and Moon is He
That giveth victory and mastery;
The Lord of being and of righteousness,
'Tis He that giveth us our more and less.
There is one path—His will—and only one—
A knowledge hidden from the moon and sun.
At His command Gív girded up his loins,
And like a savage lion sallied forth;
He took no comrade with him, but resigned
To God his body used to luxury;
If, when he reached the marches of Túrán,
He found a man alone Gív questioned him
In Turkman as to Kai Khusrau. When such
Replied: "I wot not of that prince," Gív used

[1] Kai Khusrau, son of Siyáwush and of Farangís, daughter of Afrásiyáb.

To slay him, hitch him in the lasso's noose,
Drag him aside, and cover him with dust,
That no one might discover his own secret,
Or hear his name or any news of him.
He had awhile a countryman as guide
From whom he hid the object of his quest.
At length he said: "I fain would ask a question
In confidence. If thou shalt wisely purge
Thy heart of craft and answer truthfully
Then I will give thee whatsoe'er thou wilt, V. 716
And not deny thee e'en my soul and body."
"There is no lack of knowledge," said the guide,
"But then it is dispersed 'mongst all the folk.
If I have any knowledge of the matter
Thou wilt not find me speechless."
"Where," said Gív,
"Is Kai Khusrau? Thou must declare the truth."
The guide thus answered: "I have never heard
Or asked concerning one so named."
And so
Gív smote him with the sword and laid him low.

§ 17

The Finding of Kai Khusrau

Gív like a madman roamed about to find
Some traces of the prince. While seven years passed
His loins were galled by sword and leathern girdle.
He fed on onagers and wore their skins,
At times had brackish water and green herbs,
And went about the desert and the mountains
In travail and in hardship far from men.
Now at the time when Rustam led his host
Across the river to the Íránian side
Afrásiyáb returned to Gang, Túrán

Came to his hand again, and then he bade
Pírán: "Bring hither ill-starred Kai Khusrau
Back from Máchín and give him to his mother,
But have the roads well watched."
Pírán dispatched
A messenger upon a noble camel,
And had the son of Siyáwush brought back—
A prudent and a life-inspiring youth—
And gave him to his mother. Passed a while.
As gallant Gív was roaming o'er Túrán
In melancholy case, it so fell out
V. 717 One day that, full of anxious thoughts, he came
Within the precincts of a famous wood,
And wandered woe-begone along the mead;
The world was jocund but his heart was sad.
He saw the earth all verdant, brooks a-brim,
And all the scene right apt for rest and sleep.
Dismounting from his horse he turned it loose,
And laid him down but with an anxious heart.
He said: "The foul Dív verily possessed
The paladin when he beheld that dream.
I find no traces here of Kai Khusrau:
What do I gain by all my wanderings?
Now while my comrades are engaged in war,
And while my friends are sitting at the feast,
These seeking pleasure, those in quest of fame,
My lot is throwing walnuts on a dome!
I do but spend my soul in vain, 'tis like
A bended bow; Khusrau hath not been born
At all, or fate hath flung him to the winds.
I get but toil and hardship by my quest:
Blest is the man that perisheth by poison."
With heart all sorrowful he roamed about
Those meadows in his search, and spied afar
Beside a sparkling stream a beauteous youth
Of cypress-height, a wine-cup in his hand,

And on his head a bright, sweet wreath. His mien
Betokened Grace and wisdom. Thou hadst said:—
"'Tis Siyáwush upon his ivory throne,
And turquoise-crowned; his looks exhale the scent
Of love itself, his locks adorn the crown."
Gív thought: "This is none other than the prince!
Naught but a throne befitteth such a mien."
Dismounting from his charger he advanced V. 718
On foot and, as he drew anear, the bolts
Were loosened on the portal of his travail,
And all his splendid treasure came in sight.
When Kai Khusrau looked from beside the stream
He smiled, while gladness made his heart to throb,
And thought: "This warrior is none else but Gív:
This land hath not a chief of such a stamp.
He is engaged in making quest for me
To bear me to Írán to make me Sháh."
As that redoubted warrior approached,
Khusrau the prince moved forward from his place,
And said to him: "O Gív! thou art well come;
Thy coming here is wisdom's fitting gift.
How didst thou make thy passage to this land?
What tidings hast thou touching Tús, Gúdarz,
And Sháh Káús? Are they in happiness,
And do they in their hearts think of Khusrau?
How is it with the elephantine Rustam,
The aspiring one, with Zál, and all the rest?"
Gív heard the words amazed, invoked the name
Of God, and answered: "O exalted chief!
All yearn for thee. Methinketh that thou art
The son of Siyáwush, of royal race,
And wise; but say, thou head of upright men!
Who told thee of Gúdarz, Gív, and Kishwád?
May Grace and happiness be thine."
He answered:—
"O lion-man! my mother told me this—

That when my father by the Grace of God
Entrusted unto her his last commands,
V. 719 He said: "Whatever mischief may befall me,
Still in the end will Kai Khusrau appear,
And bring a key to open all the locks.
When he hath grown a noble warrior
The doughty Gív will come forth from Írán,
And bear him to the throne among the nobles
And lion-men. His valour will restore
The world, and execute revenge for me."
Gív said: "O head of all the chiefs! what mark
Hast thou to indicate the Grace of kingship?
The mark of Siyáwush was manifest
As 'twere a drop of pitch upon a rose-bed,
Uncover then and show to me thine arm,
Because thy mark is known to every one."
The prince made bare his arm and Gív perceived
The black mark on it. Now this mark had been
A birth-mark from the time of Kai Kubád—
A clear distinction of the Kaian race.
When Gív beheld that mark he did obeisance,
And weeping told his errand. Kai Khusrau
Embraced him, giving thanks with joy, and asked
About Írán, the imperial throne, Gúdarz,
And Rustam, lover of the fray. Gív said:—
"O royal world-lord, noble, fortunate,
And wise! were God, who knoweth good and ill,
To give to me the whole of Paradise,
The seven climes and sovereign sway withal,
The seat of greatness and the crown of might,
My heart would not exult therein so much
As in beholding thy face in Túrán.
Who knoweth in Írán if I am living,
Or if I have been laid in dust or burned,
Or have encountered Siyáwush alive,
And questioned him about his care and travail?

Thanks be to God that fate determineth V. 720
This irksome toil in happiness and joy."
Together they departed from the wood
While Kai Khusrau asked after Sháh Káús,
About Gív's seven years of grief and pain,
His lodging, sleep, and food. Gív answered all,
And spake about the purpose of the Lord,
The vision of Gúdarz, his own long toil,
His victuals, clothes, and rest, his pains and pleasures;
How years had spent the Grace of Kai Káús,
And how he was distracted for his son;
How all was dark and scentless in his palace,
And how the desolation was complete.
The heart of Kai Khusrau burned at these woes,
His two cheeks flamed like fire. He said to Gív:—
"Fate giveth thee for travail rest and ease;
Be as my sire, but say not anything
To any one, and note what time will bring."

§ 18

How Gív and Kai Khusrau went to Siyáwushgird

The chieftain mounted on the steed of Gív,
And that brave warrior preceded him
With Indian sword in hand. If any met them
Gív, ever on the watch, struck off his head,
And covered up the corpse with earth and dust.
They made their journey to Siyáwushgird,
And, when they both recovered heart and wit,
They made a confidant of Farangís,
And privily agreed to quit the place,
Unnoticed by the troops. "We shall but straiten
The world to us if we delay," said she.
"Afrásiyáb will hear, will neither eat
Nor sleep, but like the White Dív follow us,

Will make our hearts despair of pleasant life,
V. 721 And leave not one of us, at large or hiding,
Alive. The world is full of enemies,
Our whole land is the abode of Áhriman.
Hear mine advice, my son endowed with Grace!
There is a meadow near out of the track
Of Turkman cavaliers; be there at dawn,
And have this saddle and black bridle with thee.
Thou wilt behold a mountain whereupon
Clouds fret their faces. Having scaled the height
Thou wilt behold the mead like jocund spring,
All rivulets and purling streams: the soul
Reviveth at the sight. When it is noon,
And thou art eager for repose, the herds
At pasture there will water at the streams.
Show to Bihzád the saddle and the bridle,
And, if he proveth tractable, advance,
Go quickly to him, let him see thy face,
Caress him with thy hand and speak to him.
When Siyáwush had given up all hope
Of this world, and his day was turned to night,
He spake thus to Bihzád his sable steed:—
'Be thou henceforth free as the wind itself.
Remain upon the mountains and the meadows,
And when Khusrau shall come in quest of thee
Be thou his charger, tramp the whole world thro',
And sweep the earth of foemen with thy shoe.'"

§ 19

How Kai Khusrau won Bihzád

The valiant chieftain mounted on his steed
With Gív in front on foot. They set their faces
Toward the heights as men who seek for safety.
V. 722 Now when the herds came down to watering,

And having drunk their fill turned to depart,
Illustrious Khusrau went hastily
Toward the stream and, to attain his wish,
Showed to Bihzád the saddle and the reins.
The steed looked at him, recognised a master,
And stirred not from the stream, but gazed with sighs
Upon the pard-skin seat of Siyáwush,
The lengthy stirrups, and the poplar saddle.
This Kai Khusrau observed and hurried up.
Meanwhile the noble black stood still and wept.
Moreover Kai Khusrau and Gív wept too,
As though they had been burning in fierce flame,
And while they shed tears from their eyes their tongues
Were full of curses on Afrásiyáb.
Khusrau caressed the horse's eyes and face,
Stroked down his chest and shoulders, scratched his hide,
Put o'er his head the bridle, saddled him,
And spake the while with grief of Siyáwush,
Then mounting gripped his legs; the mighty beast
Sped like a blast out of the sight of Gív,
Who troubled and amazed invoked God's name.
"This," he exclaimed, "is subtle Áhriman
Appearing in the likeness of a horse!
The prince's life is lost and my toil too,
My toil—the only treasure that I had!"
When Kai Khusrau had traversed half the mountain
He drew his black reins and remained till Gív
O'ertook him, then the shrewd and valiant prince
Exclaimed: "Shall I inform the paladin
What I perceived was passing in his thoughts?"
Gív said to him: "O most exalted prince!
All secrets should be open unto thee:
Thou with thy Grace divine and Kaian stature V. 723
Canst penetrate a hair and see within it."
He said: "Thou didst mistrust this noble steed,

And think: 'Now Áhriman hath got the youth,
Who hath gone off and turned my toil to wind.
My spirit mourneth and the dívs rejoice.'"
The veteran Gív dismounted from his horse,
Invoking blessing on the warrior-prince,
And said: "May day and night be fortunate
To thee, thy foemen's hearts be rooted out,
Since God hath given to thee worth and birth,
With throne and stature, state and Grace divine."
They left the heights, and set off toward the palace
With brains absorbed in thought and scheming minds
On reaching Farangís they much discussed
The toilsome journey, and the way to keep
The project secret. When she saw Bihzád
Her face was hidden by a flood of tears,
She laid her cheek against his mane and chest,
And called upon the soul of Siyáwush.
When she had wept she hurried to her hoards,
For in the palace was a secret treasure—
Known but to her—of jewels and dínárs,
Of iron maces and horse-furniture,
As well as daggers, swords, and massive sparths.
With cheeks that ran with tears of blood, and liver
Pierced by her grief, she showed her son the treasure,
And said to Gív: "O veteran in toil!
Choose what thou pleasest from this treasury—
Dínárs and jewels fit for kings to wear,
And crowns with patterns wrought in precious stones.
We are the keepers and the hoard is thine;
Thine are the toil and risk."
V. 724 He kissed the ground,
And said: "O chief of dames! thou makest earth
A Spring in Paradise, and, as thou willest,
The sky apportioneth both good and ill.
Be all the world a slave before thy son,
And be the heads of all thy foes wrung off."

When Gív's eye fell upon those precious things
He chose the mail of valiant Siyáwush.
They then selected all the choicest gems,
And bare away as much as they could carry
As well as helms, rich armour for the steeds,
And weapons suited to a paladin,
Then having locked the hoard the prince in haste
Made ready for the journey through the waste.

§ 20

How Farangís went with Kai Khusrau and Gív to Írán

This done they put the saddles on their steeds,
Those fleet and famous steeds, while Farangís
Assumed the helmet, and all three departed
Like wind and eagerly toward Írán,
But secretly and taking all precautions.
The thing, however, could not be concealed
A moment; one approached Pírán and said:—
"Illustrious Gív came from Írán to seek
The brave and shrewd Khusrau, and hath gone back
With him and Farangís."
Pírán was grieved,
And trembled like the branches of a tree.
He thought: "The king's foreboding hath proved true!
What shall I say to him? My lustre now
Is darkness in his eyes!"
He chose Kulbád
And Nastíhan—a man of steel—and bade
Three hundred Turkman horse to muster dight
For war, and thus addressed them: "Hence with you,
Lose no time in your saddles, place the head V. 725
Of Gív upon a spear, hide Farangís
In dust, and bind accurséd Kai Khusrau—
The ill-starred lackland. If the miscreant

Shall cross the river what will not befall
Our land and chiefs!"
Thus went the brave young band
Commanded by two wary paladins.
The persecuted prince and Farangís,
Worn out with journeying and nights of toil,
Had laid them down to sleep, and while they slept
Gív stood on guard with angry eyes intent
Upon the road by which the band approached.
He wore his habergeon; his helm was on;
His heart was full; he was prepared to die;
And, like a valiant chief, he had his steed
Accoutred by his side in case of need.

§ 21

How Kulbád and Nastíhan fled from Gív

Gív saw afar the dust raised by the troops,
And having drawn his sword sent up a shout
Like thunder, such a shout as would have dazed
A lion's brain and spirit, then he rushed
Like dust among the troop and made earth dark
By combat. With his sword and mace he showered
Down iron from above, till by the blows
The heads of all the chiefs grew sick of strife,
While to his eyes, such were his pain and rage,
A river seemed a rill. Anon they hemmed him—
A raging Lion in a host of men.
The field became a reed-bed with their spears,
Both sun and moon were hid, the Lion raged,
And made a winefat of the bed of reeds
With blood, o'erthrowing many of his foes:
Those valiant cavaliers were all astound,
V. 726 And thus Kulbád addressed brave Nastíhan:—
"This is a rock of flint with neck and arms!
See here the Grace of Kai Khusrau and not

The mace of Gív! I know not what will come
Upon our fields and fells, for who can traverse
The will of God? Astrologers presage
Disaster to Túrán and to her lords."
They made a charge at Gív with all their troops
Like lions, giving and receiving blows:
The battle-shouts and blast of clarions
Went up and shook the mountains to their cores,
The valleys and the plains were filled with slain,
And earth became like cercis-bloom with blood.
The whole host turned away in flight from Gív—
That noble chief, the refuge of the troops—
And made their way all wounded and fordone
To proud Pírán, while gallant Gív returned,
With breast and hands all bloody, like a lion
To Kai Khusrau, and said: "O prince! rejoice!
May health be thine, and wisdom thy companion!
Kulbád and Nastíhan the deft of hand
Have been pursuing us with hostile troops,
And those that still survive have gone back home
With necks and chests in case to ask our tears.
I know not any horseman in Írán
Save Rustam able to encounter me."
Khusrau, pure in the Faith, rejoiced o'er Gív,
Called blessings down on him, and praised him greatly;
They took some food, such as came first to hand,
And hasted on toward the trackless waste.
Now when the Turkman troops came to Pírán
So stricken, heated, and discomfited,
He spake in anger to Kulbád, and said:—
"This is a marvel which must not be hidden!
What have ye done to Gív? Where is Khusrau?
How went the matter? Tell me honestly."
Kulbád said: "If I tell, O paladin!
What gallant Gív did to our warriors,
Thou wouldst no more of battles. Thou hast seen me

V. 727 Oft with the host, and hast approved my prowess,
Yet when I charged him, thinking: 'Now shall I
Behold his overthrow,' in sooth he bore
Above a thousand buffets of mine ax.
Thou wouldst have said: 'His head is but an anvil,
His chest and arms are solid ivory!'
Oft have I gazed on Rustam in the fight,
And hearkened tales of mighty warriors,
But never knew one so endure the blows,
The rush, and whirl of war. Though we had borne
Wax maces, and our horsemen pard-skin lances,
No wonder had his shoulders, arms, and breast
Been pounded small. He kept his dash and keenness
Throughout, and bellowed like an elephant.
The plain was heaped with slain, our warriors
Were routed by one man!"
Pírán was wroth;
"Enough," he said, "'tis shame to tell the tale;
Such words as these are not for cavaliers.
Attempt no more to strive with men of war.
Thou wentest forth with noble Nastíhan,
And troops like lions; now thou makest Gív
A maddened elephant; thy fame is sped
With mighty men; Afrásiyáb at hearing
Will fling away from him the imperial crown,
Because two paladins, two gallant horsemen,
Accompanied by soldiers dight for war,
Turned tail before a single cavalier,
Who slaughtered many! Mocking and disgrace
Are thine, not standard, kettledrum, and mace."

§ 22

How Pírán pursued Kai Khusrau

Pírán chose from his troops six thousand horse—
V. 728 Brave warriors. "Swiftly ply," he said to them,

"Your fleet steeds' reins, like savage lions go
By day and night, no girdle must be loosed,
For if Khusrau and Gív shall reach Írán
The women there will be as lionesses,
And neither earth nor water will remain
Within Túrán. Afrásiyáb, heart-seared,
Will lay the blame of this escape on me,
Not on the process of sun, moon, and stars."
Thereat they raised their heads and hurried on
By day and night, till scattered and disordered
They reached a narrow river, where the stream
Was deep and difficult for men to cross,
That river which was called Gulzaryún,
And was in springtide like a stream of blood.
Upon the further bank the prince and Gív
Were sleeping: Farangís was keeping watch,
And looking round her from her post descried V. 729
The banner of the leader of Túrán!
She ran to Gív, gave the alarm, and roused
The sleepers, crying: "Man of toil! arise!
'Tis time to flee, a host pursueth us.
Our time, I fear, is come. If they shall take thee
They will not leave thee living and will rack
Our hearts for thee. Me and my son in tears
Pírán will bear bound to Afrásiyáb,
And after that I know not what may chance;
None wotteth of the secrets of high heaven."
Gív said: "O Moon of dames! why vex thy soul
Herein? Ascend yon mountain with the prince;
Fear nothing from Pírán or from his host.
The conquering Lord of earth is mine ally,
The star of fortune lieth on my breast.
By help of God, the Author of our lives,
I will not leave a rider in the saddle."
Then said Khusrau: "O warrior! my cause
Is wearisome to thee. I have been spared

The net of bale. Seek not the Dragon's breath
So oft. Be mine to go upon the plain,
And spurt blood heavenward with my scimitar."
V. 730 Gív answered: "Noble prince! the world hath need
Of thee to wear its crown. My sire and I
Are paladins whose loins are ever girt
To serve the Sháhs; three score and eighteen brothers
Have I; the world will perish with thy name,
For paladins are many, Sháhs are few.
Few? I see none! If I am slain, another
Will take my place, the royal head and crown
Will still survive; but if afar from here
Thou perish [1] I see none fit for the crown
And throne. The winds will take my seven years' toil,
My race will be disgraced. Choose then the heights,
And mark yon host. The World-lord is mine aid.
Earth is beneath thy shadowing wings; if I
Succeed thy Grace will give the victory."

§ 23

How Pírán contended with Gív

Gív donned his mail and came forth like a lion,
His steed as 'twere a mountain under him.
The chief was on this side, the host on that;
Between the river flowed and barred the way.
Gív roared out like a thunderclap in spring,
Inquiring for the captain of the host.
Pírán was wroth, upbraided Gív, and said:—
"Thou miscreant by nature and descent!
Com'st thou alone so hardily to face
An army? Thou shalt taste two-headed javelins,
While falcons' talons shall provide thy bier.
Thou art a single horseman, iron mountain

[1] "Si tu péris dans une *captivité* lointaine."—MOHL.

Although thou be. A thousand will surround thee
Like ants, will smash the armour on thy breast,
And drag thy carrion-carcase in the dust.
The mighty lion springing spake this saw :—
'Whene'er the stag hath reached its destined day
Fate reckoneth each breath drawn by the prey V. 731
Till it shall cross a lion on the way.'
So fortune now hath brought thee in my path
Here in the presence of this famous host."
Brave Gív, that chief of mighty paladins,
Replied in thunder-tones: "Thou miscreant Turkman
Of dívs begotten! perish chiefs like thee!
Thou sawest my revenge for Siyáwush,
And hadst good reason to admire my prowess,
For many chieftains of Túrán and Chín
Fell by my hand in battle. I it was
Who ravaged all thy home and wrecked thy life.
Thy two chief dames were in the company
That I dragged off in bondage from Khutan,
Thy sister one, the other was thy spouse,
Who ever tendered thee both soul and body.
When I beheld those wretched Turkman dames
I gave them to the meanest of my slaves,
While thou didst show thy back as women would,
And run away with shrieks and doleful howls.
For thee mankind should fight like womankind;
Brag not of bravery to warriors,
For chiefs shall sing hereafter to thy shame
How Gív unaided carried off Khusrau,
And all shall hold your names to be disgraced.
Again, while all the princes of the earth—
Faghfúr and Cæsar and the Khán of Chín,
The nobles and the kin of Shah Káús,
Brave men and warriors with golden casques—
Sought Rustam's daughter eagerly in marriage,
And Tús too sent to ask her, matchless Rustam

Met him with scorn, and put their offer by
Because they were unworthy. Afterward,
V. 732 When he had looked throughout the world in vain,
He gave his favourite daughter to myself—
A daughter whom he prized above his crown.
That high exalted and most noble prince
Gave me the horsewoman Bánúgashasp,
His eldest daughter, chose me of all lords,
And raised my head to heaven. I gave my sister,
That Moon of ladies—Shahr-Bánú-Iram—
To him. Excepting elephantine Rustam,
The lion-man, I do not know my match,
And when I come with him to take revenge
Ye must make ready to bewail your dead.
Now with this steel-blue falchion will I turn
The world before your eyes as black as pitch,
And if I leave one of your host alive
Give to me never more the name of man.
Íránward bear I royal Kai Khusrau
To bring him to the monarch of the brave,
To seat him on the famous ivory throne,
And place upon his head the glorious crown.
Then will I don again this precious mail,
And make Túrán the lair of mighty lions.
Son am I to Gúdarz son of Kishwád;
The noble Gív am I, the prince of chiefs,
Thou luckless Turkman, thou accursed Pírán!
May no crown, throne, or realm be ever thine.
I will behead thee with mine Indian sword,
Thy mail and helmet shall weep over thee;
Death from my twisted lasso shalt thou meet,
Thy mail and helm shall be thy winding-sheet."

§ 24

How Pírán was taken by Gív

Pírán was furious and wept with rage, V. 733
Then gripping with his legs urged on his steed,
And, with his massive mace upon his shoulder,
Launched forth like boat on stream, invoking Him
That giveth every good. Gív bode his time
Until the chief had crossed, and then, declining,
Brave leader though he was, as if through fear
The combat, fled. His foe approached, the world
Grew night-dark. Gív, when he had drawn Pírán
Afar from stream and host, flung mace on saddle
And charged "like dragon raging," thou hadst said.
Pírán the Lion fled pursued by Gív,
Who unobserved took from the straps his lasso,
Then whirling round his arm discharged the coil,
And caught his foeman's head, dismounted him, V. 734
Drave him afoot disgraced far from the stream,
Then threw him on the ground, secured his hands,
And donned his mail. When this was done Gív took
His prisoner's flag and rode up to the bank.
The Turkmans seeing their commander's flag
Advanced to meet him as a thing of course.
There rose a shout with din of clarions,
Of pipes, and Indian bells. Perceiving this
Gív strove as 'twere a boat against the waves,
And laid his massive mace upon his shoulder,
While all the troops looked at him wondering.
Soon with reins lightly held and stirrups pressed
He filled the haughty Turkmans' heads with fear,
And with his sword, his stirrups, arms, and onset
Laid them in dust. The plain was like a mountain
Of dead, one man discomfited the host.
The chieftains turned their backs, the Lion charged

The Flock, that great host fled from Gív, who crossed
The stream again so fresh that thou hadst said:—
"He hath not dreamed of foes." He hurried back
To cut Pírán's head off, but drave him first
Afoot, scorned, hustled, and beside himself,
In anguish, wan, and wretched to Khusrau.
Gív then dismounted, drew anear the prince,
And, having kissed the ground and homaged him,
Exclaimed: "This miscreant and faithless man
Is now a captive in the Dragon's jaws,
V. 735 So let him now be even as the wind,
Like Siyáwush, who hearkened to his words."
Pírán too did obeisance to the prince,
Cried with a loud voice, kissed the ground, and said:—
"O prince that seekest after understanding,
And art a shining sun among the people!
Thou knowest mine affliction, my distress,
And struggle with the king on thine account.
Prince Siyáwush had lived if I thy slave
Had been at court. By rede and artifice
I saved thee and thy mother from the Dív.
So by thy Grace and fortune grant that I
Have from this Dragon's clutch my liberty."

§ 25

How Farangís delivered Pírán from Gív

Gív looked for orders at Khusrau and saw
The tearful eyes of Farangís, whose tongue
Was fraught with curses on Afrásiyáb.
She said to Giv: "O chief, who hast endured
Such wanderings! this hoary paladin
Is both a wise and understanding prince;
And know that next to God—our Judge and Guide—
He was the means of saving us from death.

He with his love screened us from injury,
And seeketh now for quarter in return;
So grant him to us, O thou noble one!
For he hath never led the way to ill."
Gív said to her: "O chief of ladies! live
For ever bright in mind and joyfully.
I swore a mighty oath by moon and crown,
And by the great Sháh's throne: 'If I shall get
The best of him in battle I will make
Earth with his blood like cercis-bloom.'"
Khusrau
Said: "Keep thine oath to God, thou lion-like!
And ease thy heart on that score: pierce his ear V. 736
Through with thy dagger, and as blood-drops fall
Thence to the ground think of both love and vengeance."
Gív saw the prince's heart warm to Pírán,
Perceived the prince's cheeks all tears and ruth,
So went and pierced Pírán's ear with his dagger,
And slept in peace because his oath was kept.
Pírán said to Khusrau: "I cannot go
Back to the host afoot; bid him restore
My steed; then thou hast given me life and means."
The valiant prince requested Gív: "Bestow
On me his charger, O thou mighty Lion!"
Gív spake thus to Pírán: "Brave warrior!
Why hast thou grown so feeble on the field
Of fight? If thou wouldst have thy wind-foot steed,
First will I bind thy hands, then thou shalt gain
Thy liberty upon a mighty oath
That none shall loose thy bonds except Gulshahr,
Because she is the chief among thy dames,
And knoweth thee completely—skin and marrow."
The paladin agreed and purchased life V. 737
And charger, swearing: "None shall loose my bonds
Upon the way. Gulshahr alone shall do it."

Gív bound him, brought the horse, and bade him mount.
Then Farangís and goodly Kai Khusrau
Embraced him tenderly; he took his leave
With many blessings on Khusrau and Gív.

§ 26

How Afrásiyáb found Pírán on the Way

The sun turned dark before Afrásiyáb
When news came from the host; he sounded trump
And tymbal, called to horse and went like fire.
In haste he made two stages into one,
And sped forth like an arrow from the bow.
Arriving at the place whereat Kulbád
Had fought he saw troops scattered o'er the land,
While everywhere lay bodies of the fallen.
He asked: "How came this paladin with troops
Here from Írán? None of our warriors
Knew of a mighty army coming thence.
Who told those sons of dívs that Siyáwush
Had offspring here? If dust had been his tutor
Mine eyes had never seen a day like this."
"Thou mayst be easy," Sipahram replied,
"So far as thy concern is for an army.
V. 738 'Twas Gív, son of Gúdarz, none else; we saw
No other cavalier with him. One man
Discomfited our troops in fight, and so
Gív and the prince and Farangís escaped."
On hearing this the monarch's cheeks turned pale:
His heart was full of pain at this reverse;
He answered: "This is as the sages said.
When God bestoweth fortune on a man
He cometh to the throne without an effort."
While they conversed a host appeared in sight

Led by Pírán besmirched with dust and blood.
The king imagined: "He hath captured Gív,
And come on first with news of victory,"
But, nearer, saw that he was wounded sore
And bound fast as a rock upon the saddle,
With both hands pinioned tightly at his back.
The king amazed and pained asked what it meant.
Then said Pírán: "No ravening wolf or tiger,
Or savage lion, is like Gív in battle,
Although alone. The fear of fighting him
Would make a crocodile burn under water.
He first attacked us with a massive mace,
And dealt us blows as with a blacksmith's hammer.
By dint of steed and dexterous horsemanship
He overthrew, smote down our cavaliers,
And slaughtered them at will, yet cloud ne'er rained
More drops than sword-strokes fell upon his head!
In sooth his saddle was no bed of roses;
Thou wouldst have said: 'He is a mountain's match.'
At last our troops all turned and I alone
Remained to fight with him. He fled from me,
But threw his twisted lasso, and my waist V. 739
Was taken in its coils. I lost my head,
And fell with all my weight upon the ground.
He lighted from his charger, bound my hands.
And then remounting drave me on before him.[1]
He carried me in shame to Kai Khusrau,
And would have had my head, but Farangís
Came to mine aid; he spared my life but pierced
Mine ear, and in a fury bound my hands,
Then by the Sháh's own life and head, by sun
And moon, by God Almighty, crown and throne,
Proposed to me a mighty oath, and I,
Since I saw fortune hostile, duly swore
That nobody should loose me but my wife,

[1] Reading with P.

Gulshahr. Thus did he bind me head and foot
With lassos and, when that was done, by oaths.
I know not why the sky hath ceased to love me."
Afrásiyáb on hearing wept for rage,
And lifting up his voice drave forth Pírán,
Who writhing as he was made no reply.
Then blustering and cursing swore the king:—
"Though Gív and that Dív's child were thunder-clouds
Or storm-winds I would make them fall from heaven.
With this," he drew his sword, "this iron-piercer,
Will I in vengeance rob them both of breath,
And as for Farangís will make the world
Both strait and dark to her when I shall catch her,
V. 740 For I will cleave her with the scimitar,
And fling her to the fish to tear in pieces.
Khusrau is fain to seek Írán, but why
Should Farangís thus bear him company?"

§ 27

How Gív disputed with the Toll-man

Pírán departed sadly toward Khutan:
Meanwhile Afrásiyáb pursued his march
Toward Jíhún, and in his anger trailed
His skirt in blood. He bade Húmán: "Haste on,
And draw rein at the river. If Khusrau
And Gív get over, any pains of ours
Are but a desert-blast. I was forewarned
Of this by what a sage said long ago:—
'The seed of Túr and Kai Kubád combined
Will raise a monarch of illustrious mind
To make Túrán a brake of thorns again,
And leave no city on its wide champaign.
Írán will have his love, Túrán will know
The vengeful face that looketh on a foe."

When Gív and Kai Khusrau had reached the stream
In haste to cross they wrangled with the toll-man.
Gív said: "What swift and well appointed boat
Fit for the use of Kai Khusrau is here?"
The man replied: "What hath a stream to do
With king or slave? If thou hast need to cross
It is incumbent to bespeak a boat."
Gív said to him: "Demand whate'er thou wilt,
But let us cross because a host approacheth."
The officer, on hearing this from Gív,
Became extortionate, and said: "I ask
No little toll, but one of four—thy mail,
Thy black steed, handmaid, or thy moon-like page."
Gív answered him: "O thou of broken wits! V. 741
Do words like these become a man like thee?
Were he a subject of the king of kings
Thou wouldst receive thy portion from the world;
But what art thou to ask the Sháh himself?
Art thou so hasty, miserable wretch?
And then his mother is thy next demand!
Thou wouldest have the moon's crown as thy toll!
Or thirdly thou requirest black Bihzád
Who when he hasteth overtaketh wind!
Or fourthly in thy folly thou wouldst take
My mail, when mail is indispensable,
And this is steel which water will not wet,
And such as fire and Indian scimitars,
Or spears or arrows, have no power to harm!
Thou wouldst have toll: then take it in the river!
The stream for us, the ferry-boat for thee;
'Twill not be easy to collect thy fee!"

§ 28

How Kai Khusrau crossed the Jíhún

Gív told the prince: "If thou art Kai Khusrau
The stream will favour thee. When Farídún
Crossed the Arwand [1] it led him to the throne,
And all the world became the slave of him
Who had the Grace and glory. Tarry not
If thou art Sháh, the shelter of the Lions
And warriors. The stream will give thee passage,
Who hast the mien and Grace to deck a throne.
If I, or if thy mother should be drowned,
Grieve not. For thee I lived because the throne
Of king of kings was naught. My mother too
Bare me for thee. Pause not or else, I doubt not,
Afrásiyáb will reach the river-bank
V. 742 In fury, hang me on the shameful gibbet
Alive, and fling thyself and Farangís
To feed the fish or tread you under hoof."
Then Kai Khusrau replied: "So be it. Enough.
My refuge is with God the Succourer."
He lighted, groaned, fell prostrate in the dust,
And said: "Thou art my refuge and support;
Thou showest justice and Thou art my way.
Thy Grace for good or ill sufficeth me;
The shadow of Thy wing is wisdom's soul."
He spake, and radiant as the morning star
Bestrode his sable steed, took to the water,
Reached like a boat the toll-house opposite,
And issued from the bed of the Jíhún
With gallant Gív and Farangís behind him.
Thus all three safely gained the other side,
Where Kai Khusrau, his head and body bathed,
Thanked and adored the Maker of the world.

[1] See vol. i. p. 160.

As they went o'er the master of the boats
Astound said to his mates: "Behold a wonder!
This passeth all! Springtide! Jíhún in spate!
Three steeds and riders mailed! No sage would deem
Him man who went across in such a case."
He saw his plight, regretted his rash words,
Supplied his boat with such things as he had,
Set sail and went to ask the prince's pardon. V. 743
When he arrived upon the farther shore
He brought his offerings before Khusrau,
He brought a bow, a lasso, and a casque,
But Gív thus answered him: "Insensate dog!
Thou saidst: 'The stream will sweep a man away,'
And when so great and puissant a prince
Requireth thee to furnish him a boat
Refusest! Perish all thine offerings!
A day will come when thou wilt think of this."
The river-warden went off in chagrin,
Despairing of his life. On his return
The army from Túrán was at the toll-house.
Afrásiyáb, not seeing man or boat
Upon the stream, cried fiercely to the toll-man:—
"How found that dív his way across the water?"
The man replied: "O king! my father took
The toll as I do, yet I never saw
Or heard of one who made the water land.
In springtime when the waves are running high
If thou dost enter there is no escape,
Yet those three riders crossed! Thou wouldst have said:—
'The air supported them upon its breast,'
Or, 'They are children of the rushing wind—
The messengers dispatched by God to man.'"
Afrásiyáb on hearing this turned pale,
And sighing deeply bade the man: "Launch forth
A boat upon the river with all speed.

See if thou canst discern the fugitives,
Upon the road or stopping for repose,
That I may take them prisoners. Make dispatch,
Out with the boat, and get thee gone at once."
Then said Húmán to him: "O king! consider,
And kindle not a fire within thy breast.
Wilt thou essay Írán with these few horsemen,
Essay the breath and clutches of the Lions,
V. 744 The elephantine Rustam and Gúdarz,
Tús and Gurgín the shatterer of hosts?
Thou must be weary of the throne indeed
If thou wilt go thus to the Lions' claws.
Hence all is thine to Chín and to Máchín;
Sun, Saturn, Moon, and Pleiades are thine.
Guard thou Túrán and thine own lofty throne:
We need not now fear mischief from Írán."
With that they turned them in chagrin away,
And matters long continued in this stay.

§ 29

How Kai Khusrau came to Ispahán

When Kai Khusrau and Gív arrived at Zam
Most men rejoiced but certain were displeased.
Gív sent out messengers to every part,
And wrote thus of the valiant prince: "The chieftain
Head of the race of noble Kai Kubád—
The exalted, blesséd Kai Khusrau, to whom
The waters of Jíhún were as a throne—
Hath come rejoicing from Túrán."
He chose
Among the chiefs of Zam a messenger,
A valiant cavalier, wise, shrewd, and prudent,
Informed him of the case, and said to him:—
"Depart hence unto Ispahán—the land

Of Sháhs, the habitation of the mighty—
And tell Gúdarz: 'O chief of paladins!
Thy mind was not asleep when thou didst dream.'
Then add this: 'Kai Khusrau hath come to Zam,
And not a blast hath done him injury.'"
He wrote a letter unto Sháh Káús.
The messenger arose and went his way.
The wind-foot camels with their lips afoam
Rushed onward fire-like. First he sought Gúdarz,
Declared the message, and gave up to him V. 745
The letter, which the paladin in chief
Placed to his head with tears for Siyáwush
And maledictions on Afrásiyáb.
The messenger went on to Kai Káús
While drops of sweat fell from the camels' necks.
When he approached the palace-gate a shout
Of gladness rose, the monarch gave him audience,
And sprinkled jewels over Gív's dispatch.
They decked the whole world in their happiness,
They called for minstrels everywhere, while Rustam,
When tidings of Gív's triumph reached Nímrúz,
Gave gold in largess to the mendicants
Because that Lion had received no hurt;
And afterward dispatched Bánúgashasp,
Like lightning, bearing treasures, and with her
Twelve hundred mighty men of name with gifts
Of thrones and heavy crowns, three hundred damsels,
And six score youths, all bearing golden goblets.
The lady left her sire and went to Gív
As swiftly as a bird upon the wing,
While news spread everywhere: "The monarch's son,
The young prince Kai Khusrau, is on his way."
As for the men of leading in the world
They all resorted unto Ispahán.
Gúdarz prepared his stately residence,
And draped it with imperial brocade,

Prepared a throne with gold and jewelry,
Such as must needs be worthy of the Sháh,
And armlets, torques, and earrings with a crown
V. 746 Of royal gems. He had the city decked,
Prepared the Ground, and mounted on his steed.
The illustrious chiefs arose and, all being ready,
Went forward seventy leagues to meet the prince
Upon the road according to their custom.
As soon as Gív appeared with Kai Khusrau
The valiant cavaliers advanced on foot.
Gúdarz the chieftain when he saw the prince,
Accompanied by Gív upon the road,
Shed tears of gall and in his deep distress
Spake much in memory of Siyáwush.
The paladin then lighted from his steed,
And clasped the youthful monarch to his breast,
Paid him high compliments, did reverence,
And said to him: "O monarch of the earth!
Be bright in fortune and be bright in heart;
I would not lose thee for a realm or throne.
Far from thee be thy foeman's evil eye,
And may the soul of Siyáwush be bright.
God is my witness that to see thee lengtheneth
My life. If I saw Siyáwush alive
I should not laugh so from the heart as now."
He kissed the head and eyes of Gív and said:—
"Thou hast revealed a very heaven to us.
Thou art no sluggard but a warrior;
Yet on occasion thou canst bide thy time."
Then all the mighty warriors of Írán
Bent down their faces to the ground before him,
And as they turned back on their way rejoicing
The fortunes of those haughty men grew bright.
They reached the palace of the paladin,
All reached it full of joy and happiness.
There for one sennight in the festal hall

They tarried wine in hand, but toward the city
Of Sháh Káús upon the ensuing day
With joyful hearts set forward on their way.

§ 30

How Kai Khusrau came to Káús

When Kai Khusrau appeared before the Sháh V. 747
The world was filled with colour, scent, and beauty,
And everywhere in festal trim. The doors,
The roofs, and walls were full of precious things,
While minstrels had been stationed in all quarters,
And there were wine, rose-water, musk, and saffron.
The horses' manes were drenched with musk and wine,
While sweets and drachms were scattered under foot.
The tears coursed down the cheeks of Kai Káús
When he beheld the visage of Khusrau.
He came down from his throne, approached the prince,
And with his face caressed the prince's head
And eyes. The youthful atheling did homage,
And then they paced back to the throne together.
The Sháh inquired at large about the Turkmans,
And how the ruler of that people fared.
The prince replied: "That man of little wit
Still walketh on the face of earth for ill.
Why doth the Sháh inquire about that wretch?
May pleasure, crown, and throne be never his!
He slew my father vilely, shamefully,
And beat my mother with harsh blows that I
Might perish in the womb! May he ne'er scape
From woe! As soon as my pure mother bare me
That miscreant dispatched me to the mountains.
Among the cattle, goats, and buffaloes,
I reckoned by the sun my nights and days.
At length Pírán arrived, and from the heights

Conducted me to that vindictive king.
I trembled at his rage and savagery,
Afraid of what might come. He asked me questions,
While I concealed what wit and worth I had.
If he inquired of heads I spake of feet,
If he inquired of food I talked of place.
God took away his sense and intellect,
And so the dullard took me for a fool,
V. 748 Conceived my head to be ill stocked with brains,
And sent me to my mother with a curse."
Káús said: "Noble youth! the world desireth
That thou shouldst wear the crown, for thou'rt a prince,
And, like the king of kings, both wise and worthy."
Khusrau said: "Monarch of this ancient throne!
If I should give thee an account of Gív,
And what hath been accomplished by his hands,
The Sháh would wonder, and no marvel too,
Because it passeth bounds. Full many a hardship
Did he endure, and sought me in Túrán
With strivings, yet he bore not toils so great
As those which followed in my company,
For then two noble paladins with troops
Came after us like fire upon the road.
Idolater of Hindústán beholdeth
No maddened elephant do what I saw
Gív do. Methought: 'No crocodile will come
Forth from the streams to fight thus!' That great host,
And those two paladins, were seized with panic—
Both old and young alike—and afterward,
What time Pírán came boldly with girt loins
Upon a wind-foot steed, Gív flung his lasso
And caught the paladin. I interceded,
O king! for him, else Gív had ruthlessly
Struck off his head. Know that Pírán had suffered
Through anguish for my sire, had never spoken
V. 749 Aught ill of me, and saved me and withal

My mother from the fierce, grim Lion's claws,
Who else had ta'en my head just like my father's.
Thus till we reached the banks of the Jíhún
Gív with his ox-head mace ceased not from combat.
A paladin like him should keep his youth
For ever."

When Káús had heard Khusrau
His cheeks bloomed like a rose. He clasped Gív's head,
And kissed his face and bosom many times,
Then gave him presents such as in the world
None, whether great or small, had seen before.
They wrote a patent out on painted silk
For Khurásán, Rai, Kum, and Ispahán.
The prince, whose Grace divine was as Jamshíd's,
Gave these to Gív, whose head rose to the sun.
"Thou hast," the Sháh said, "undergone much toil,
So now, O toiler! take thy fill of treasure."
Gúdarz and all his sons with faces laid
Upon the ground called blessings down on him.
He had a golden pleasure-house prepared
For Farangís with earrings and a torque,
Set golden seats within the halls thereof,
Embellished the interior with brocade
Of Chín, and said to her: "O chief of dames!
May'st thou ne'er weep for sorrow. Thou hast left
Both land and kin, and borne much on the way.
Írán is now thy home, thy rede my guide."
That Moon of ladies blessed him. "May," said she, V. 750
"The world and age ne'er be deprived of thee."

§ 31

How Tús refused Allegiance to Kai Khusrau

Kishwád possessed a palace at Istakhr—
The glory of the nobles. Thither went,
Their audience with the monarch being closed,

Gúdarz with Kai Khusrau. When they had reached
That pleasance with its arabesques of gold
They placed the prince upon a golden throne,
And called down blessings on him as their Sháh.
The warriors of Írán all did him service
Save Tús, son of Naudar, who turned away:
'Twas he that had the drums, the golden shoes,
And charge of Káwa's standard. Much displeased
Gúdarz dispatched a friendly embassage
By brave, ambitious Gív, the man that had
The clutch of heroes and the leap of lions.
Gúdarz said: "Say to Tús, son of Naudar:—
Seek for no pretexts at this time of joy.
The nobles and the Lions of Írán
Have all invoked a blessing on the prince.
Why dost thou draw back at the Dív's command,
And quit the way of Him who ruleth earth?
If thou refusest to obey Khusrau
There will be strife and vengeance 'twixt us twain.
The messenger is Gív, the words are mine,
And sanctioned by the nobles here assembled."
Gív left the presence of his sire with words
Of anger in his heart. On reaching Tús
V. 751 He said: "Thy rede and wisdom are not mates."
Tús hearing that replied: "It is not good
To play off tricks on me, for in Írán,
Save elephantine Rustam, I am first
Among the chieftains that command the host,
And grandson of the valiant Minúchihr,
The Sháh who with his sword subdued the world.
Naudar my father was the king of earth,
I represent the race of Farídún.
Whenever I engage myself in fight
I rend the lion's heart and leopard's hide.
Ye have, without my counsel and consent,
Established a new monarch in the world:

I will not be a party to this thing,
So talk not in my presence of Khusrau.
If from the offspring of Afrásiyáb
We make a king, then will our fortunes sleep.
We want no Sháh descended from Pashang;
A flock is ill entrusted to a leopard.
This is the fruitage of these toils of thine,
For Kai Khusrau is young and violent,
While he that ruleth earth should have high lineage,
Worth, Faith, and Grace. Now Faríburz, the son
Of Sháh Káús, is worthier of crown
And throne, not sprung from foes on either side,
But having Grace and glory, fame and right."
Then Gív arose in dudgeon, doubting both
The wisdom and the honesty of Tús,
And said: "O Tús, illustrious warrior!
Withdraw not when the drums sound. When thou seest
The spear-heads of the kindred of Gúdarz
The gain that thou expectest will prove loss.
The many toils that we have borne together
Thou throwest to the winds. Hadst thou the Grace
And counsel we had sought not from Alburz
A monarch; and thy head hath not the crown
Because thou lackest brains and royal rede;
God doth bestow the throne of sovereignty V. 752
On one who hath the Grace, mien, sense, and counsel."
He spake thus wrathfully and showed his back
In anger; thence returning to Gúdarz
He said: "Tús is no mate for rede and wisdom.
Thou wouldest say: 'His eyes are blind.' His choice
Is Faríburz, although no sovereign
On golden saddle is our prince's peer,
Nor have we such another cavalier."

§ 32

How Gúdarz was wroth with Tús

Gúdarz was full of wrath and said: "May Tús
Cease from among the nobles of the world.
Now will we let him see to whom belong
The Grace, the sovereign sway, throne, state, and fortune."
His sons and grandsons numbered seventy-eight.
He beat the drums and marched forth from the palace
Out to the open with twelve thousand men
Of his own kin, brave troops on barded steeds,
Led by himself, that shatterer of hosts.
Upon the other side came Tús, the chieftain,
And bound the drums upon the elephants,
While many warriors girded up their loins,
And Káwá's standard led the central host.
Tús saw Gúdarz with such a multitude
As dazed the eyes of sun and moon, he saw
A mighty elephant which bore a throne
Of turquoise as resplendent as the Nile.
Upon it sat the aspiring Kai Khusrau,
With loins girt up and crown upon his head,
V. 753 Surrounded by ten score huge elephants;
Thou wouldst have said: "The world hath not a Sháh
Save him." Khusrau shone moonlike on the throne,
With earrings, torque, and armlets, on his head
A crown of glittering gems, and in his hand
An oxhead mace. Tús thought with saddened heart:—
"If I shall fight to-day there will be slain
A multitude of warriors in both hosts.
This feud shall not arise within Írán,
For naught would better please Afrásiyáb,
The fortune of the Turkmans would awake,
The throne of empiry pass to Túrán,

And our prosperity be at an end."
He sent a man of wisdom and resource
To Sháh Káús to say: "If any here
Among us lay a shaft of poplar wood
Upon his bow there will arise a fight
Whereof Afrásiyáb will dream all night."

§ 33

How Gúdarz and Tús went before Káús on the Matter of the Kingship

Káús, on hearing these wise words, dispatched
A messenger to summon both the chiefs.
He went before the captain of each host,
And mildly said: "Experienced veteran!
Put not fell poison in a cup of milk,
Replace thy sword, and loose thy girdlestead;
This gain of ours must not be turned to loss.
Let both the captains of the hosts appear
Before me and without a retinue."
They went before the Sháh and Tús spake thus:—
"If now the Sháh is weary of the crown
And throne, his son should have the world, the might,
The diadem, and throne of majesty.
Why should a grandson, when there is a son, V. 754
Put on the crown and sit upon the throne?
Now Faríburz hath Grace and royal mien,
And girdeth him as 'twere a savage lion."
Gúdarz replied: "O thou of little wit!
No sage would reckon thee to be a man.
None in the world hath equalled Siyáwush
Or been so great, discreet, and reticent.
Now this aspirant is a son of his,
'The same,' thou wouldest say, 'in face and form.'
If on his mother's side he is from Túr

The grandson of the Sháh must still prove just.
There is not in Írán or in Túrán
One like him: to what end is thy crude talk?
Thine eyes have never even seen his face,
His lofty mien, and lovingkindliness.
He crossed Jíhún and needed not a boat,
Such were his royal Grace and steadfast purpose.
As with Sháh Farídún, who crossed the Arwand
Without a boat, his courage and God's Grace
Preserved him from the hand and eye of ill.
Moreover, to avenge his father's blood,
He like a savage lion girdeth him
To banish toil and trouble from Írán,
And over-reach astute Afrásiyáb.
Surúsh the glorious said to me in sleep:—
'His Grace will still the war-cry in Írán,
And when he shall adorn the crown and throne
Of chiefs, the world will cease from toil and hardship.'
Thou art no alien; thou art from Naudar:
Thy father was perverse and thou art mad.
Had I my weapons I would drench thy neck
And breast in blood, would slay thee with my sword,
v. 755 And end thy silly talk. Thou makest discord
Among the Kaians for thy selfish ends.
The king of kings acknowledgeth Khusrau,
And will bestow the throne on whom he will.
Tús said: "O ancient chief! what rancorous words!
Though thou art from Kishwád yet I am Tús,
Son of Naudar, a Sháh and a Sháh's son,
And if thy sword will penetrate an anvil
My spear will rend the centre of Mount Káf.
v. 756 What booteth wordy war betwixt us twain?
The king of kings doth know who is the chief."
Gúdarz replied to him: "Talk not so much;
I see not that thy glory is so great."
Then said he to Káús: "Experienced Sháh!

Turn not from rule and custom, call before thee
The noble youths, and let thy clear mind judge;
Discern between them which is worthier
As having royal mien and Grace divine,
And give to him the crown and throne if thou
Art weary of the crown and host thyself."
Káús replied to him: "This is not well,
For both alike are dear; when I have chosen
One then the other will seek vengeance on me.
I will take means that this may not betide
Among our folk. Let both, each with a host,
Go to the entering in of Ardabíl—
The march where is the castle of Bahman, V. 757
And Áhriman is ever making war
On those that worship fire. No archimages
Dare settle there. I will give up the throne
Of kings to him who captureth that fortress."
Gúdarz and Tús, contented with the plan
Of their clear-sighted chief, proposed no better,
But set their hearts on its accomplishment,
And from the monarch's presence forth they went.

§ 34

How Tús and Faríburz went to the Castle of Bahman and came back foiled

Now when Sol rose in Leo, and the night
Was turned beneath, came Faríburz and Tús
In haste before the Sháh, and Tús spake thus:—
"Now will I take the drums, host, elephants,
With Káwa's flag, and turn the ruddy cheeks
Of foemen pale. The Grace of Faríburz,
And royal might, shall gird me royally."
The Sháh replied: "When men go forth to war

Their number more or less importeth not,
But by the purpose of the Lord of sun
And moon they may have triumph and success:
So if it seemeth good to Faríburz,
Array thine army and be diligent."

V. 758 Tús with the golden boots upon his feet
Went forth with Káwa's standard. Faríburz,
Son of Káús, was at the army's centre,
While Tús went first with troops and elephants.
When he drew near the castle of Bahman
The ground seemed breathing fire, the lances' points
Flamed in the heat, the men of war were scorched
Beneath their mail. Thou hadst said: "Earth is burning,
Air is a net of rebel Áhriman's!"
The ramparts rose to heaven; none knew a way
To battle there. Tús said to Faríburz:—
"A man of mettle going into fight
With lasso, falchion, and artillery,
Will strive to wreck his foes, but to this castle
Is no approach, at least we know it not.
Our loins are scorching underneath our mail,
The bodies of our beasts of burden burn.
Have no anxiety within thy heart:
Thou hast not ta'en, and none can take, this hold."
They went about the castle seven days,
And found no entrance, then turned back again
Despairing; their long journey proved in vain.

§ 35

How Kai Khusrau went to the Castle of Bahman and took it

When tidings reached the chiefs and old Gúdarz,
The offspring of Kishwád: "Tús hath returned

With Farîburz, prepare thyself to go,"
He donned his mail, shouts rose, the world's new lord V. 759
Khusrau came forth. They set a golden throne,
Inlaid with emeralds, on an elephant;
Around the prince were warlike cavaliers
With flags of violet, with golden boots,
With crowns of amber, and with torques of gold
Adorned with divers gems. Gúdarz thus spake:—
"This is the first of days, for Kai Khusrau,
The atheling, accedeth to the throne."
The atheling sat on the golden seat,
Crowned and with mace in hand; he with Gúdarz,
Gîv, and a numerous host went toward the castle.
When near the hold he girded up his loins,
Put on his mail, and, mounted on his charger,
Dictated to a scribe in lofty terms
A letter, which they wrote in royal style
With ambergris, and in the olden tongue:—
"This letter cometh from the Almighty's slave—
From noble Kai Khusrau the atheling,
Who, freed from wicked Áhriman's constraint,
Hath cleansed his hands from ill by help of God,
Who is eternally the Lord most high,
The Giver of our daily bread, our Guide,
The Lord of Mars, of Saturn, and the Sun,
The Lord of Grace, the Lord of puissance,
Who gave the throne and Grace of kings to me,
Fierce lion's claws and elephantine bulk.
The whole world is my kingdom; all is mine
From Pisces downward to the Bull's head. Now
If this hold be of Áhriman's domain,
The enemy of Him who made the world,
I by the Grace, and Holy God's command, V. 760
Wilt cast it headlong from the clouds to dust;
And if it is a hold of sorcerers
I can dispose of them without a host,

For when I have looped up my leathern lasso
I take the heads of sorcerers in the noose;
While if the blest Surúsh himself is there
The host is one at the command of God.
I am not of the seed of Áhriman;
My soul hath Grace, my body lofty stature;
By God's command I will reduce the castle,
Such are the orders of the king of kings."

Khusrau then took a lengthy lance and fixed
Thereto the haughty letter banner-wise;
He asked for naught on earth but royal Grace,
And ordered Gív to hasten with the spear
Up to the lofty ramparts, saying thus:—
"Take thou this letter of admonishment,
And bear it to yon lofty castle's wall;
Plant there the spear, call on the name of God,
Then quickly turn thy rein and hurry back."

That worshipper of God, that glorious chief,
Gív, took the spear in hand and went his way.
He set the letter by the wall, delivered
The message of Khusrau, pronounced the name
Of God who giveth good, and fled like wind.
That noble letter vanished with a crash,
Dust flew, and by command of Holy God
The rampart of the stronghold split asunder;
Thou wouldst have said: "It thundereth as in spring."
A shout went up from plain and mountain-top,
The earth became black as a negro's face,
Sun, Moon, and Pleiades were lost to sight,
And thou hadst said: "A murky cloud ariseth,
The air is like a mighty lion's maw."

Then Kai Khusrau urged on his sable steed,
And shouted to the captains of the host:—
V. 761 "Make arrows rain in showers upon the hold,
And let your bows be like a cloud in spring."

Immediately a cloud rose charged with hail,

Hail charged with death; full many a dív was slain
And many venom-stricken fell to earth.
At length a brilliant light began to shine,
And all the heavy darkness cleared away;
A glorious breeze sprang up; the heaven above,
And all the face of earth, began to smile;
The world became as 'twere the shining moon
By God's name and the prince's Grace, the dívs
Went at his bidding, and the gate was seen.
The monarch of the free made entry there
With old Gúdarz, the offspring of Kishwád,
And saw a mighty city in the hold,
All gardens, spaces, halls, and palaces.
Upon the spot where darkness cleared and light
First shone Khusrau commanded to erect
A dome ascending to the darksome clouds.
It was ten lassos long and broad, its circuit
Was half a rapid Arab charger's course,
And round it there were lofty cupolas.
He brought and stablished there Ázargashasp,
And round it settled the astrologers,
The archmages, and the men of lore. He tarried
Till that Fire-fane attained to good repute,
And, when a year had passed, led forth his force,
Made up the baggage-train, and called to horse.

§ 36

How Kai Khusrau returned in Triumph

When news of Kai Khusrau, of his success,
And of God's Grace upon him, reached Írán
The world was in amazement that the prince V. 762
Had won that Grace and greatness; all the chiefs
Went forth with joy and brought him offerings.
Prince Faríburz approached him with a band

Of warriors from Írán as 'twere a mountain,
And seeing him gat off his rose-red steed,[1]
Whilst brave Khusrau alighted from his black.
The uncle kissed the nephew on the face,
And, having set for him a throne of gold
Inlaid with turquoise, seated him thereon,
And joyfully saluted him as Sháh.
Then Tús approached him, bringing Káwa's flag,
The drums, and golden boots, and, having kissed
The ground, surrendered them to Kai Khusrau,
And said: "See who deserveth in the host
The drums, gold boots, and Káwa's glorious flag.
Give them to him; I merit them no more:
Mine errors cannot hope for aught but life."
Thus he apologised, abandoning
His foolish enterprise. The conquering prince
Received him well, placed him upon the throne,
And said: "For Káwa's standard, for the post
Of paladin, and for the golden boots,
I see none fitter in the host than thee,
Thine is the office and the rank is thine;
I have no wrath against thee in my heart,
Thou needest not to tender an excuse;
Thou didst not wish to have an alien Sháh."
The atheling both shrewd and fortunate
Departed thence upon his way to Párs,
And Kai Káús, when he received the news:—
"The youth of lucky steps hath come," went forth
With cheeks like cercis-bloom to welcome him:
The old man's heart grew young with happiness.
V. 763 Khusrau beheld his grandsire from afar,
And smiled; his heart was throbbing with delight;
He went afoot and offered reverence.
His grandsire, fain to look on him, embraced him

[1] At the present day the horses of the Sháh and of his sons have their tail-tips dyed red. (C. J. Wills, M.D., "Persia as it Is," p. 9.)

With smiles and praises well deserved, and said:—
"The Lion hath returned victorious,
Confounding his opponents' hearts and eyes."
They sought the palace and the world-lord's throne—
His who had made the diadem his own.

§ 37

How Káús set Khusrau upon the Throne of Kingship

When they arrived they lighted from their steeds
With heartfelt, joyful greetings on their tongues.
Khusrau advancing kissed his grandsire's hand,
And laid his cheek against the throne. Káús
Took the young prince's hand, right joyfully
Set him upon the Sháh's own seat, and bade
The treasurer bring forth the royal crown.
He kissed Khusrau and, having crowned him, quitted
The splendid ivory throne and sat below.
He brought an offering of emeralds
With many royal jewels from his treasures,
Invoking blessings oft on Siyáwush,
Whose image was Khusrau. Then all the nobles, V. 764
The chiefs, the leaders, and great men assembled,
They called down blessings on him as their Sháh
And sprinkled gold and jewels over him.

The use and fashion of this world it is
To take with that hand and to give with this;
We are aggrieved because of its caprice,
And alternate 'twixt summit and abyss.

If then thy heart alloweth thee be glad,
Ensue but pleasure while it may be had,
Provide thee well and give the rest away,
And suffer not one moment to be sad.

Enjoy thy wealth and be not niggardly,
But share not earnings with thine enemy;
God gave to thee and will give to thy child—
That sucker springing from the parent tree.

Perceivest not how fully earth is stored
With wealth and furnished with good things? The Lord
Abateth nothing in His bounteousness:
Abstain from sorrow and let joy be toward.

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[1] This is assumed in all cases where it is doubtful which Gustaham is meant. Cf. vol. i. p. 369.

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[1] See vol. i. p. 396 *note*.

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